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THE ADVENTURES OF GIL BLAS  
OF SANTILLANA.







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THE ADVENTURES  
OF  
GIL BLAS  
OF SANTILLANA

RENDERED INTO ENGLISH  
By HENRI VAN LAUN

WITH AN  
*INTRODUCTORY NOTICE, LIFE OF LESAGE, AND NOTES*



VOLUME THIRD

EDINBURGH: WILLIAM PATERSON

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*Designed and Etched by Ad. Lalauze.*

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## BOOK VIII.



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I WAS so surprised not to have heard anything from Nunez during all this time that I concluded he must be in the country. I went to his lodgings as soon as I could walk out, and learned, in fact, that he had left for Andalusia three weeks ago with the Duke of Medina Sidonia.

One morning, as I was getting up, Melchior de la Ronda came into my mind; and recollecting that I had promised him at Grenada to go and see his nephew, if ever I should return to Madrid, I took it into my head to keep my promise that very day. I enquired where Don Balthazar de Zuniga lived, and went there. On asking if Señor Joseph Navarro was at home, he soon made his appearance. I saluted him, and he received me politely but coldly, though I had given my name. There was no reconciling such a freezing reception with the character which had been given to me of the clerk of the kitchen. I

was about to withdraw, fully determined not to pay him a second visit, when, all at once assuming a frank and cheerful manner, he said to me with much vivacity—"Ah, Señor Gil Blas of Santillana, pray excuse the reception I have just given you. My memory ill seconded the prepossession I feel in your favour; I had forgotten your name, and did not think you were the gentleman mentioned in a letter which I received from Grenada, more than four months ago. Allow me to embrace you," he added, throwing his arms around my neck, as if delighted. "My uncle Melchior, whom I love and honour like my own father, wrote to say that if ever I should have the honour of meeting you, he begged me to treat you as though you were his son, and to employ my influence and that of my friends for you, if necessary. He extols the qualities of your heart and of your understanding in such terms as would interest me to serve you, even if his recommendation did not induce me to do so. Consider me then, I entreat you, as a man to whom my uncle has imparted, by letter, all his sentiments with regard to you. I offer you my friendship; do not refuse me yours."

I replied in suitable terms of acknowledgement to Joseph's politeness; and, from that hour we contracted a close intimacy like two warm hearted and sincere men. I did not hesitate to disclose to him how I was situated.



This I had no sooner done than he said, "I will undertake to procure you a place; and meanwhile be sure and come here every day for your meals. You will get a better dinner in this house than at your inn." This offer was too acceptable to be refused by a convalescent who was badly off, and accustomed to good living. I accepted it; and I recruited my strength so well in his house that at the end of a fortnight I already began to look like a Bernardine monk. Melchior's nephew appeared to feather his nest there in fine style; but how could it be otherwise? He had three strings to his bow. He was at the same time butler, clerk of the kitchen, and steward. Moreover, friendship apart, I fancy that he and the comptroller of the household got on very well together.

I was thoroughly recovered when my friend Joseph, on my coming one day to de Zuniga's mansion to dine as usual, accosted me and said cheerfully—"Señor Gil Blas, I have a pretty fair situation to offer you. You must know that the Duke of Lerma, the Prime Minister, in order to give himself up entirely to the affairs of the State, throws the burden of his own on two individuals. Don Diego de Monteser<sup>1</sup> is entrusted with the collecting of his rents, and his household expenditure is managed by Don

<sup>1</sup> Monteser's name, according to Llorente, was supposed to be Monterey.

Rodrigo de Calderon. Both these confidential men discharge their functions with absolute authority, and independently of each other. Don Diego generally employs two stewards as receivers; and as I learned this morning that he has discharged one, I applied for the vacant place for you. Señor Monteser, who knows me, and of whose regard I may boast, readily granted my request, on the strength of my recommendation of your character and abilities. We will go to his house this afternoon."

So we did. I was received very affably, and installed in place of the steward who had been dismissed. My duties consisted in visiting our farms, in giving orders for the necessary repairs, and in receiving the money of the tenants; in a word, it was my business to look after the country property. Every month I took my accounts to Don Diego, who, notwithstanding the good character that my friend had given me, examined them very scrupulously. This was just what I wanted; for though my integrity had been so ill repaid by my last master, I was resolved to persevere in it.

One day news came that a fire had broken out at the Castle of Lerma,<sup>1</sup> and that more than half of the building was in ashes. I went at once to see what damage had been done;

<sup>1</sup> The Castle of Lerma, situated on the river Arlanzon, seven leagues from Burgos, a very large and splendid edifice, with a great park, was built by the Duke of Lerma.

and having inquired carefully on the spot into the circumstances of the accident, I drew up a long account of it, which Monteser showed to the Duke of Lerma. This minister, though vexed at having received such bad news, was struck by my narrative, and could not help asking who had written it. Don Diego not only told him my name, but spoke of me so favourably that his Excellency remembered it six months afterwards, in connection with an incident which I shall now relate, and but for which I might, perhaps, never have been employed at Court.

There was living at that time in the street of the Infantas, an elderly lady named Inesilla de Cantarilla,<sup>1</sup> whose parentage was a matter of mystery. Some said she was the daughter of a lute-maker, and others of a Commander of the Order of St Jago.<sup>2</sup> However that may have been, she was a wonderful person. Nature had bestowed upon her the singular privilege of charming men throughout her entire life: a privilege which she still retained though she

<sup>1</sup> Cantarilla is the Spanish for "a little stone jar," a supposed allusion to Inesilla's low origin, because in Spain only women of the poorer classes, *Mozas de Cantaro*, carry jars with water on their heads.

<sup>2</sup> The Order of St Jago, the highest order of knighthood in Spain, was instituted in the twelfth century. The knights swore to defend the pilgrims who visited the tombs of St James at Compostella from the insult of the Moors, and their motto was *Sanguine Arabum*. These knights wore two crosses, in the shape of a red cross, on their shoulders.

was more than seventy-five years old. She had been idolised by the noblemen of the old Court, and she saw herself adored by those of the present one. Time, which does not spare beauty, attacked her in vain; it impaired it without depriving her of the power to please. A noble bearing, a fascinating wit, and an inborn grace enabled her to inspire passion even in her old age.

Don Valerio de Luna, one of the Duke of Lerma's secretaries, a young gentleman of five-and-twenty, saw Inesilla, and fell in love with her. He declared his love in the most amorous terms, and pursued the object of it with all the impetuosity which youth and passion can excite. The lady, who had her reasons for not complying with his wishes, was at a loss to know how to check him. One day she thought she saw her opportunity; she took the young man into her private room, and there, pointing to a clock upon the table, said to him: "Mark what time it is; at this same hour and on this very day I came into the world, seventy-five years ago. Candidly now, would it become me to engage in affairs of gallantry at my time of life? Reflect on this, my child; suppress these feelings so unsuitable to yourself and to me." After this sensible speech the gentleman, who was past obeying the authority of reason, answered the lady with all the impetuosity of



a man racked by such emotions as his. "Cruel Inesilla, why do you resort to these vain remonstrances? Do you think they can change you in my eyes? Do not delude yourself with such an empty hope. Whether you are in reality such as I behold you, or whether glamour affects my sight, I shall not cease to love you." "Well, then," she rejoined, "since you are so obstinate to persist in the resolution of wearying me with your attentions, my house shall henceforth no longer be open to you. I forbid you to enter it, and command you never to come near me again."

After this, it may be supposed that Don Valerio, disconcerted by what he heard, politely withdrew. On the contrary, he became more importunate than ever. Love produces in lovers the same effect as wine does in drunkards. The gentleman entreated and sighed; and passing suddenly from entreaties to rage, would have attempted by foul means what he could not have obtained otherwise. But the lady, bravely repulsing him, said in an angry voice: "Stop, rash boy, I must check your insane ardour; learn that you are my son."

Don Valerio was thunderstruck at these words; his violence subsided. But, fancying that Inesilla had only said this to rid herself of his entreaties, he replied to her: "You are inventing this fable to escape from my love." "No, no," she interrupted, "I disclose to you

a secret which I would always have concealed from you had you not reduced me to the necessity of revealing it. Twenty-six years ago I was in love with Don Pedro de Luna, your father, then governor of Segovia. You were the fruit of our mutual passion; he acknowledged you as his son, and had you carefully educated; and as he had no other child, your good qualities induced him to leave you his property. I, for my part, have not neglected you. As soon as I knew you were entering the world I attracted you to my house, that I might endow you with those polished manners so necessary to a gentleman, and which female society alone can give to young men. I have done more; I employed all my influence to get you into the Prime Minister's service. In short, I have exerted myself for you as it was my duty to do for a son. After this confession, take your measures accordingly. If you can purify your sentiments, and look on me only as a mother, I shall not banish you from my sight, but will treat you with all the tenderness which I have hitherto felt for you. But if you are not equal to an effort which nature and reason require of you, leave me this very moment, and spare me the horror of seeing you."

Thus spoke Inesilla; and meanwhile Don Valerio maintained a sullen silence. It might have been supposed that he was calling his



virtue to his aid, and was about to gain a victory over himself. But these thoughts were not uppermost in his mind; he was contemplating another design, and preparing for his mother a very different spectacle. Unable to overcome the grief he felt at this obstacle to his happiness, he basely yielded to despair. Drawing his sword he plunged it into his breast, and took vengeance on himself like another *Œdipus*; with this difference, that the Theban plucked out his own eyes from remorse for the crime he had perpetrated, whilst the Castilian stabbed himself, full of grief because he could not commit it.

The unfortunate Don Valerio did not at once die of the wound he had inflicted on himself. He lived long enough to acknowledge his crime, and to pray Heaven to forgive him for having taken his own life. As by his death he left vacant his secretaryship to the Duke of Lerma, this minister, who had not forgotten my account of the fire, nor the praises which he had heard of me, nominated me to occupy this young man's place.<sup>1</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> An adventure somewhat similar to that of *Inesilla* and Don Valerio is said to have happened to *Ninon de Lenclos* (1616-1706) and the *Chevalier de Villiers*, but this story rests on very little proof. See also vol. ii. page 184, note 1.

## CHAPTER II.

GIL BLAS IS INTRODUCED TO THE DUKE OF LERMA, WHO ADMITS HIM AMONG THE NUMBER OF HIS SECRETARIES. THIS MINISTER SETS HIM TO WORK, AND IS SATISFIED WITH WHAT HE DOES.

It was Monteser who brought me this pleasant news, and said to me — “Friend Gil Blas, though I regret losing you, I like you too well not to be delighted at your appointment as successor of Don Valerio. You will infallibly make a large fortune, provided you act upon two hints which I am going to give you. First, show yourself so deeply attached to his Excellency that he cannot doubt your entire devotion to him. Next, pay assiduously your court to Señor Don Rodrigo de Calderon; for that man moulds the mind of his master like soft wax. If you are fortunate enough to secure the goodwill of this favourite secretary, you will make great progress in a short time; I can safely answer for that.”

“Señor,” I said to Don Diego, after thanking him for his good advice, “pray tell me something about Don Rodrigo’s character. I have not seldom heard him spoken of in society. He has been described to me rather

unfavourably; but I mistrust pictures drawn of persons who have an official position at Court, although sometimes men judge of them sensibly. Tell me therefore, I beseech you, what you think of Señor Calderon." "You ask me a delicate question," replied the comptroller with an ironical smile. "To any one but yourself I should say, without hesitation, that he is a gentleman of the strictest honour, of whom nothing but good can be said; but I will be frank with you. I am convinced that you are a very discreet young man, and, therefore, it seems to me that I ought to speak to you candidly about Don Rodrigo, since I have advised you to be very careful with him; otherwise I should only be half helping you."

"You are to know then that, from being a mere servant of his Excellency, when the latter bore no other name than Don Francis de Sandoval, this man has gradually risen to the position of principal secretary. A prouder man was never seen; he barely responds to the attentions paid to him, unless compelled to do so by powerful reasons. In a word, he considers himself as the colleague of the Duke of Lerma; and in point of fact it may be said that he shares with him the authority of Prime Minister, since he bestows offices and governments on whomsoever he thinks proper. The public often grumble at it; but he scarcely troubles himself about that. So long as the

business yields him handsome presents<sup>1</sup> he cares very little for those who censure him. You can imagine from what I told you," added Don Diego, "how you have to deal with such a supercilious individual." "To be sure," I said, "leave me alone for that. It shall go hard if I do not make him like me. When we know the weakness of a man we wish to please, we must be very unskilful if we do not succeed." "In that case," replied Monteser, "I will introduce you at once to the Duke of Lerma."

We went a few minutes afterwards to the minister, whom we found in a spacious hall, busily receiving people, for his levee was better attended than the King's. There were commanders and knights of Saint Iago and of Calatrava,<sup>2</sup> who were soliciting governorships and vice-royalties; bishops who, not feeling very well in their dioceses, wanted to become archbishops, simply for change of air; and good fathers of the orders of Saint Dominic and Saint Francis, humbly asking for bishoprics. I also saw some disbanded officers playing the same

<sup>1</sup> The original has *paraquantes*, a Spanish word meaning "for gloves," because formerly only gloves were given as presents.

<sup>2</sup> The order of Calatrava was instituted in the year 1158 to fight against the infidels. The knights made a vow of poverty, obedience, and conjugal fidelity; and took an oath to maintain the Immaculate Conception. They first wore a white scapulary with a little hood; but in 1397 they adopted a large white cloak, ornamented with a red cross.



part which Captain Chinchilla had formerly acted—that is, dancing attendance in the hope of obtaining a pension. If the duke did not satisfy all their wishes, he at least received their petitions affably; and it struck me that he returned a very polite answer to all applicants.

We waited patiently until he had despatched all these applicants. Then Don Diego said to him—“Your Excellency, this is Gil Blas of Santillana, the young man appointed by your Excellency to succeed Don Valerio.” At these words the duke looked at me, saying obligingly that I had already deserved the post by the services I had rendered him. He then took me into his study to speak with me alone, or rather to judge of my understanding by my conversation. First of all he asked who I was, and what life I had hitherto led; he even required that I should give him a faithful narrative of my adventures. What a story he asked of me! But there was no such thing as telling falsehoods to the Prime Minister of Spain. On the other hand, there was so much to be told at the expense of my vanity, that I could not make up my mind to confess everything. How was I to escape from this dilemma? I determined to embellish the truth where its nakedness might have offended him. But he did not fail to discover it, in spite of all my skill. “Señor de Santillana,” he said with a smile, when my story was finished, “it seems

to me you have been a bit of a rogue.”<sup>1</sup> “My lord,” I answered, colouring up to the eyes, “Your Excellency enjoined me to be sincere; and I have obeyed.” I thank you for it,” he replied. “Well, my young friend, you have got off cheaply; I only wonder that bad example has not irreparably ruined you. How many worthy men would have turned out great rascals if fortune had exposed them to the same trials.

“Friend Santillana,” continued the minister, “think no more of the past; remember that you now belong to the king, and that henceforth you will be occupied in his service. Come this way; I will show you what your duties are to be.” With these words the duke led me to a little room adjoining his own, where, upon shelves, there were a score of very thick folio registers. “This is your workshop,” he said. These registers which you see constitute a dictionary of all the noble families in the various kingdoms and principalities of the Spanish monarchy. Each book contains in alphabetical order an abstract of the history of all the nobly born of one kingdom, wherein are detailed the services which they and their ancestors have rendered to the State, as well as the affairs of honour in which they may have been engaged. Their wealth, their characters, in a word, all their good and evil qualities are

<sup>1</sup> The original employs the Spanish word *picaro*.



also mentioned here; so that, when they come to solicit favours at court, I can see at once whether they deserve them. In order that I may obtain an exact knowledge of all these things I everywhere have persons in my pay who take care to procure such informations, and to transmit to me their reports; but as these reports are diffuse, and full of provincial forms of expression, they require to be condensed and their diction improved, as the King sometimes orders these registers to be read to him.<sup>1</sup> On this work, which requires a clear and concise style, I wish to employ you without delay."

After this introduction, he took from a large portfolio full of papers a document which he placed in my hands; then he went out of the room, leaving me to make my first attempt at my ease. I read the report, which struck me as being not only crammed with barbarous terms, but also as being too impassioned. Yet it was a monk of the town of Solsona who had written it. His reverence, affecting the style of an honest man, ruthlessly tore to pieces a good Catalonian family; and Heaven knows whether he spoke the truth! It read, for all

<sup>1</sup> These "score of registers" are somewhat like the numerous manuscript volumes which the *intendants* of the provinces of France wrote by order of the Duke of Burgundy, in 1698, and which contained the private history of every nobleman. The Count de Boulainvilliers has given some extracts from them in his *Etat de la France*, published in three volumes in 1727.

the world, like a scandalous libel, and at first I had some scruples about setting to work upon it; I was afraid of becoming an accomplice in a calumny. Nevertheless, novice as I was at court, I went through it, at the peril and risk of the holy man's soul; and laying all the iniquity, if there was any, at his door, I set to work to dishonour, in good Castilian phrases, two or three generations of possibly worthy people.

I had already written four or five pages when the Duke, impatient to know how I got on, came back and said—"Santillana, show me what you have done. I am curious to see it;" and casting his eyes upon my work he read the beginning very attentively. It seemed to please him so much that I was surprised. "Prepossessed as I have been in your favour," he said to me, "I confess you have surpassed my expectation. You not only write with all the clearness and precision I could wish for, but your style is also light and easy. You quite justify my selecting you as my secretary, and console me for the loss of your predecessor." The Minister would not have cut my panegyric so short, if the Count of Lemos, his nephew, had not interrupted him in the middle of it. His Excellency embraced him frequently, and it was evident by his reception that he loved him tenderly. They were closeted together to speak in private on

some family matter, whereof I shall have something to say hereafter, and with which the Duke was then more occupied than with the King's affairs.

While they were thus engaged I heard it strike twelve. As I knew that the secretaries and their clerks quitted their offices at that hour to go and dine wherever they thought fit, I left my work and went, not to Monteser, since he had paid me what was due, and I had taken leave of him, but to the most famous tavern at the court end of the town. An ordinary eating-house would suit me no longer. "Remember that you now belong to the King"—these words of the Duke were continually recurring to my mind, and became the seeds of an ambition which increased every instant in my soul.

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### CHAPTER III.

GIL BLAS LEARNS THAT HIS POST IS NOT WITHOUT ITS DRAWBACKS. THE ANXIETY CAUSED BY THIS DISCOVERY, AND THE CONDUCT WHICH IT IMPOSED UPON HIM.

I took good care, on entering, to tell the landlord that I was secretary to the Prime Minister; and as such I did not know what

to order to be got ready for my dinner. I was afraid of asking for something which should appear parsimonious, and I told him to give me what he pleased. He treated me sumptuously; and I was waited upon with various marks of respect, which caused me more pleasure than the good cheer. When it came to paying I threw a pistole on the table and left to the waiters the change, which was at least one-fourth of the coin. After this I sallied forth, expanding my chest like a young fellow mightily pleased with his own appearance.

Within twenty yards from this spot there was a large boarding-house, principally frequented by foreign noblemen. There I hired a suite of five or six well-furnished rooms, as if I had already had an income of two or three thousand ducats a year. I even paid the first month in advance. Afterwards I returned to my work, and spent all the afternoon in continuing what I had begun in the morning. In a small room adjoining mine there were two other secretaries, but these only wrote out what the Duke brought them to copy. I made their acquaintance that very evening as we were going away; and the better to gain their friendship I took them to my tavern, where I ordered the choicest delicacies of the season, and the most delicate and highly esteemed Spanish wines.

We sat down to table and began to converse



with more cheerfulness than wit; for, to do my guests justice, I soon saw that they did not owe their official situations to their genius. They were well up in fine round handwriting, but they had not the least trace of university culture.

On the other hand, they were wonderfully keen where it concerned their own petty interests, and they gave me to understand that they were not so intoxicated with the honour of being in the Prime Minister's service as not to grumble at their condition. "We have now been full five months working at our own cost," said one of them. "We have seen nothing of our salary; and what is worse, that salary is not fixed yet, so that we do not know on what footing we are." "As for me," said the other, "I would not object to be paid with twenty lashes, if I were at liberty to engage myself elsewhere; for I dare not go of my own accord, or ask for my discharge. After the secrets I have had to transcribe, I might possibly make a trip to the tower of Segovia, or the castle of Alicante."

"How then do you manage to live?" I asked them. "I suppose you have means of your own." They said they had very little, but that fortunately for them they lodged with an honest widow who gave them credit, boarding them for a hundred pistoles a year each. This talk, of which I did not lose a word, at

once checked my aspiring pride. I concluded that doubtless no more attention would be paid to me than to others ; that consequently I need not be so delighted with my condition ; that it was less substantial than I had thought ; and, in short, that I could not be too careful with my purse. These reflections cured me of the rage for spending. I began to repent of having brought these secretaries to the tavern ; I wished for the end of the meal, and when the reckoning had to be settled I squabbled with the landlord about the charge.

My colleagues and I separated at midnight ; for I did not press them to drink any more. They went home to their widow, and I withdrew to my splendid apartments, which I now regretted having taken, and was firmly resolved to give up at the end of the month. It was of no use for me to lie down on a good bed, for my anxiety banished sleep, and I spent the rest of the night considering how I might avoid serving His Majesty gratuitously. I intended to follow, on this occasion, the advice of Monteser ; and rose resolved to pay my respects to Don Rodrigo de Calderon. I was in a very fit mood that day to appear before so proud a man, for I felt that I should have need of him. Accordingly I went to the secretary's.

His apartments communicated with the Duke of Lerma's, and rivalled them in magnificence. It would have been hard to dis-



tinguish, by the furniture, the master's from the servant's. I sent in my name as Don Valerio's successor, but that did not prevent my being kept waiting more than an hour in the ante-chamber. "Newly-fledged secretary," I said to myself in the meanwhile, "exercise patience, if so please you; you must dance attendance<sup>1</sup> long enough before you make others do so."

At last the door of the inner-room was opened; I went in and advanced towards Don Rodrigo, who, having just written a love-letter to his charming Sirena, was at that very moment giving it to Pedrillo. I had not approached the archbishop of Grenada, nor Count Galiano, nor even the Prime Minister so respectfully as I presented myself to Señor Calderon. I paid my respects to him, bowing to the very ground, and entreating his patronage in terms so abject that I cannot recall them without shame. My servility would have prejudiced me in the mind of a less haughty man; but he was well pleased with my grovelling manners, and even said to me, obligingly enough, that he would lose no opportunity of doing me a service.

Upon this, thanking him with great demonstrations of zeal for the favourable sentiments

<sup>1</sup> In French, *vous croquerez bien le marmot*. The verb *croquer* means "to sketch," and *marmot* is "a marmoset," "a puppet," or "a brat." Richelet and Furetière in their dictionaries, say: "painters who have to wait somewhere, amuse themselves by drawing *marmots* on the walls." But why only *marmots* is not stated.

he entertained towards me, I vowed to be forever devoted to him. Then, for fear of troubling him, I withdrew, begging him to excuse me if I had interrupted him in his important avocations. I had no sooner taken this unworthy step than I went away very much ashamed of myself; and returned to my office, where I finished my prescribed task. The Duke did not fail to visit me during the forenoon. He was no less pleased by the end of my work than he had been by the beginning; and he said to me—"This is very well done; copy this abridged narrative, in your best handwriting, in the Catalonian register. You can take then another report from the portfolio, and deal with it in the same fashion." I had a pretty long conversation with his Excellency, and was delighted at his gentle and familiar manner. What a difference between him and Calderon! They formed a most striking contrast.

I dined that day at an eating-house where the price was reasonable, and resolved to go there every day incognito, until I saw what would be the result of my complaisance and servility. I had money enough for three months at most. I gave myself that time to work for other people, and intended—as the shortest follies are the best—to abandon the Court and its tinsel after that, if no salary were forthcoming. I arranged my plan accordingly. Dur-

ing two months I spared no pains to please Calderon, but he took so little notice of all my efforts that I despaired of success. I then changed my conduct towards him. I ceased to pay him court, and applied myself wholly towards making the most of the brief conversations which I had with the Duke.

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## CHAPTER IV.

GIL BLAS BECOMES A FAVOURITE OF THE DUKE  
OF LERMA, WHO ENTRUSTS HIM WITH AN  
IMPORTANT SECRET.

ALTHOUGH His Grace did little more than appear and disappear day after day, yet I gradually made myself so agreeable to him that he said to me one afternoon—"Attend to me, Gil Blas. I like your disposition, and I have a kindly feeling for you. You are a zealous, faithful young fellow, full of intelligence and discretion. I do not think I shall be misplacing my confidence by granting it to you." When I heard these words I threw myself at his feet; and after respectfully kissing the hand he held out to raise me, I replied—"Is it really possible that your Excellency condescends to honour me by so great a favour? What a number of secret foes your kindness

will conjure up for me ! But there is only one man whose enmity I fear ; and that is Don Rodrigo de Calderon."

" You need fear nothing from that quarter," replied the Duke. " I know Calderon. He has been attached to me from his childhood. I may say that his opinions are so much in harmony with my own that he cherishes whatever I love, and hates all that I dislike. Instead of being alarmed at his taking a dislike to you, you may on the contrary reckon on his friendship." By this I could plainly perceive that Don Rodrigo was a cunning schemer, who had gained an ascendancy over his Excellency's mind, and that I could not be too much on my guard against him.

" To make a beginning of my confidence," pursued the duke, " I will unveil to you a design which I have in contemplation. It is necessary for you to be informed of it, in order that you may acquit yourself well of the commissions with which I mean to entrust you later on. For a great length of time I have seen my authority generally respected, and my decisions implicitly obeyed. I dispose as I please of places, employments, governorships, vice-royalties and church-preferments ; I rule in Spain, if I may venture to say so, and cannot advance my fortune any further ; but I would secure it against the storms which are beginning to threaten it ; and for this reason I



should like to have, as my successor in office, the Count of Lemos, my nephew."

At this point the minister, observing my extreme surprise at what I had heard, went on thus—"I can plainly see, Santillana, what astonishes you. It seems to you very strange that I prefer my nephew to the Duke of Uzeda, my own son. But you must know that the latter has too narrow a mind to occupy my place, and that I am, moreover, his enemy. He has discovered the secret of making himself agreeable to the King, who would like to have him for his favourite; and this is what I cannot endure. The favour of a sovereign is like the possession of a woman whom we adore; it is a happiness whereof we are so jealous that we cannot be persuaded to share it with a rival, however closely connected we may be with him by blood or friendship.

"Thus," he continued, "I bare to you the inmost feelings of my heart. I have already tried to ruin the Duke of Uzeda in the king's mind, and as I have not succeeded, I have thought of another way of attacking him. I am determined that the Count of Lemos shall insinuate himself into the good graces of the Prince of Spain. Being a gentleman of his bedchamber, he has an opportunity of conversing with the Prince at all moments; he is, moreover, intelligent, and I know a sure means of enabling him to succeed in this under-

taking. By this device my nephew will be pitted against my son; I shall create a disagreement between the cousins which will compel them both to seek my assistance; and the need they will have of me will render them both submissive. This is my plan," he added, "and your co-operation will not be useless to me in the matter. It is you whom I will send secretly to the Count of Lemos, and who shall communicate to me whatever he has to impart."

After this confidence, which I looked upon as ensuring my fortune,<sup>1</sup> I had no further anxiety. "At last," I soliloquised, "I am standing underneath the eaves, and a shower of gold will rain down upon me. It is impossible that the confidant of a man who sways the Spanish monarchy should not soon be overwhelmed with riches." Full of such a pleasant expectation, I watched my poor purse dwindle away with a feeling of indifference.

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<sup>1</sup> In the original *que je regardai comme de l'argent comptant* "which I looked upon as ready money."



## CHAPTER V.

GIL BLAS IS OVERWHELMED WITH JOY, HONOUR,  
AND WRETCHEDNESS.

THE minister's partiality towards me was soon perceived at Court. He made a point of displaying it in public, entrusting me with his portfolio, which he always was accustomed to carry himself on his way to the council. This novelty, causing me to be regarded as a sort of favourite, roused the envy of several people, and made me the recipient of a good deal of Court friendship.<sup>1</sup> My two neighbours, the secretaries, were not among the last to compliment me on my approaching greatness, and they invited me to supper at the widow's, less by way of returning my hospitality than with a view of inducing me to interest myself on their behalf in future. I was courted on all sides; and even the proud Don Rodrigo modified his bearing towards me. He who had never yet addressed me as anything but "you," without ever resorting to say "your lordship," now called me nothing else but "my lord of Santillana."<sup>2</sup> He overwhelmed me with

<sup>1</sup> *Je reçus de l'eau bénite de cour*, literally "I received court holy water," Lesage says.

<sup>2</sup> For the use of "your lordship" in French, *voire seigneurie*, see INTRODUCTORY NOTICE, vol. i., page xxxvii., 2°. Santillana is the name of a town which gave its title to Íñigo Lopez de Mendoza,

civilities, especially when he thought our patron would observe him. But I can assure you he had no fool to deal with. I replied to his attentions the more politely the more I hated him; an old courtier could not have acted better than I did.

I also accompanied my lord Duke when he had an audience of the King; and he usually went there three times a day. In the morning he had access to His Majesty's chamber as soon as the latter was awake. He knelt at the head of the bed, conversed upon the matters which had to be attended to during the day, and put into the King's mouth what it would be necessary to say. Then he withdrew. He returned as soon as the King had finished dinner, though not to speak to him on state affairs, but to converse on cheerful subjects. He entertained the monarch with all the amusing events which had taken place in Madrid, of which he was always informed as early as possible by persons specially appointed, who were in his pay. Lastly, in the evening, he saw the king again for the third time, and gave him such an account, as he saw fit, of all the transactions of the past day, asking, for form's sake, the royal commands for the morrow. Whilst he was with the King, I

Marquis of Santillana (1398-1458), who distinguished himself by various poems, by his collection of proverbs, his criticisms, and many other literary acquirements.

remained in the antechamber, where persons of the first rank, worshippers of Court favour, sought to have speech with me, and congratulated themselves if I deigned to enter into conversation with them. How, after this, could I help not thinking myself a person of importance? There are plenty of people at Court who, on less grounds than this, have held a like opinion of themselves.

One day I obtained still greater food for my vanity. The King, to whom the Duke had spoken very favourably of my style, was curious to see a sample of it. His Excellency told me to take the Catalonian register, and to follow him into the monarch's presence, where he bade me read the first report which I had abridged. If the presence of the King disconcerted me to begin with, that of the Minister soon reassured me, and I read my production, which His Majesty heard with pleasure. He had the goodness to remark that he was satisfied with me, and even to recommend my fortunes to the special care of his Minister. This by no means diminished the pride which I already felt; and the conversation which I had a few days later with the Count of Lemos supplied all that was necessary to fill my head with ambitious dreams.

I went to this nobleman, on the part of his uncle, at the Prince of Spain's palace, and presented him with my credentials, wherein the

Duke informed him that he might deal unreservedly with me, as I was perfectly acquainted with their design, and had been selected to be their go-between. After reading this letter the Count took me into a room where we were closeted together; and there the young nobleman spoke to me as follows: "As you are in the confidence of the Duke of Lerma, I have no doubt you deserve it, and I need not hesitate to give you mine also. You must know, then, that things are proceeding as well as possible. The Prince of Spain distinguishes me above all the nobles who are attached to his person, and who aim at pleasing him. This morning I had a private conversation with him, in which he showed himself annoyed that, through the King's parsimony, he was unable to indulge the dictates of his generous heart, or even to spend as much as was befitting a prince. Hereupon I, of course, condoled with him; and profiting by the opportunity, I promised to bring him to-morrow morning, at his levee, a thousand pistoles, as an earnest of larger sums with which I have engaged to supply him forthwith. He was delighted by my promise, and I am certain of securing his favour, if I can keep my word. Go," he continued, "and acquaint my uncle with these particulars; and return this evening to let me know what he thinks about it."

I left the Count of Lemos after he had spoken thus, and rejoined the Duke of Lerma,



who, after having listened to my statement, sent to Calderon for a thousand pistoles. In the evening these were given into my charge, and I set off with them to hand them to the Count, muttering to myself: "So, so! I can see now what infallible means the Minister possesses for succeeding in his undertaking. Upon my soul he is right; and to all appearance his prodigalities will not ruin him. I can easily guess from what coffers these good pistoles come; but after all, is it not right that a father should support his son?"

The Count of Lemos, at our parting, said to me in a low voice, "Farewell, dear confidant! The Prince of Spain is rather fond of the ladies;<sup>1</sup> you and I must have a little talk on that subject one of these days. I foresee that I shall soon want your assistance." I departed, pondering over these words, which were by no means ambiguous, and which delighted me. "The deuce!" I exclaimed; "behold me on the point of becoming love messenger to the heir of the crown!" I did not stop to enquire whether this was a good thing or a bad; the rank of the gallant

<sup>1</sup> The Prince of Spain must have been a very precocious youth. In the first chapter of the tenth book of *Gil Blas* it is mentioned that whilst our hero was leaving Madrid, Paul V. appointed the Duke of Lerma Cardinal; this happened in 1618, and as the intrigue with the Prince took place some months before, and as he was born in 1605, he can only have been thirteen years old. However, he died in 1665 as Philip IV., and left behind him thirty-two illegitimate children.



deafened the voice of morality. What an honour for me to be minister to the pleasures of a great prince. "O! softly, Mr Gil Blas," some people will say to me, "at most you were only to be deputy-minister." Undoubtedly; but in reality these two positions are equally honourable, the difference lies only in the profits.

Whilst I was acquitting myself of these honourable commissions, and daily advancing farther in the favour of the Prime Minister, how happy should I have been if, with the best possible prospects, ambition could have protected me from hunger! I had given up my splendid suite of apartments more than two months ago, and taken up my quarters in one of the most modestly furnished little rooms. Though I was more or less annoyed at this, yet as I left it in the morning and only returned home at night to sleep, I bore my lot with patience. All the day I was on the stage, that is, at the Duke's house, where I played the part of a nobleman; but when I returned to my garret, the nobleman vanished, and there only remained poor Gil Blas, without money, and what is worse, without the means of getting any. Not only was I too proud to reveal my necessities to anyone, but I knew not a creature who could help me except Navarro; and him I had neglected too palpably, since I had been at Court, to venture on applying to him. I had

been obliged to sell my clothes, one by one, and had none left except those I could not possibly do without. I no longer went to the eating-house, because I had no more money to pay for my dinner. What then did I do to keep body and soul together? I will tell you. Every morning they brought us into our office, for our breakfast, a small loaf and a little wine. This was all the refreshment that the Minister provided for us. I ate nothing else during the day, and in the evening I more often than not went supperless to bed.

Such was the condition of a man who made a splendid figure at Court, though he might well be more an object of pity than of envy. However, I could no longer endure my misery, and ultimately determined to disclose it to the Duke of Lerma, if I could find an opportunity. By good luck such an occasion presented itself at the Escorial,<sup>1</sup> whither the King and the Prince of Spain went a few days after I had formed my resolution.

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<sup>1</sup> The Escorial, a royal palace about six leagues from Madrid, was built by order of Philip II., at a cost of about five million ducats. Several of the Spanish monarchs are interred there.

## CHAPTER VI.

HOW GIL BLAS GAVE THE DUKE OF LERMA A HINT  
OF HIS WRETCHED CONDITION, AND HOW THAT  
MINISTER TREATED HIM.

WHILE the King was at the Escorial he paid the expenses of everybody, so that there I did not feel where the shoe pinched.<sup>1</sup> My bed was in a dressing-room adjoining the Duke's chamber. One morning this Minister, having risen as usual at daybreak, bade me take a few papers with pen and ink, and follow him into the palace gardens. We went and sat down under some trees, where, by his order, I assumed the attitude of a man writing on the crown\* of his hat, whilst the Duke held a paper in his hand, pretending to read it. From a distance we must have looked as if taken up with very serious affairs, and yet we only spoke of trifles; for his Excellency did not dislike them.

For more than an hour I had been amusing him with all the jests which my merry mood brought into my head, when two magpies came and perched on the trees which shaded us. They began to chatter in such a noisy manner that they attracted our notice. "It seems that these birds are quarrelling," said the Duke.

<sup>1</sup> The French has *où le bât me blessait*, where the pack saddle was hurting me.

“I should like to know what they are wrangling about.” “My lord,” I said, “your curiosity reminds me of an Indian fable which I have read in Bidpai,<sup>1</sup> or some other fabulist.” The minister asked me what the fable was, and I related it in the following words:—

“Once on a time there reigned in Persia a good monarch, who, not having sufficient talent to govern his states himself, left the care of them to his grand vizir. That minister, whose name was Atalmuc, had a superior mind; he supported the weight of this vast monarchy without being overwhelmed by it. He maintained it in profound peace, and also had the art of making the royal authority beloved as well as respected, so that the subjects had an affectionate father in a vizir who was faithful to his prince. Atalmuc had amongst his secretaries a young native of Cashmere, named Zeangir, for whom he had a greater affection than for all the others. He felt a pleasure in conversing with him, took him with him when following the chase, and even disclosed to him his most secret thoughts. One day when they were hunting together in the woods, the vizir, seeing two ravens croak on

<sup>1</sup> This apologue is not in Bidpai, but in the Spanish Infante don Juan Manuel's *Conde Lucanor*, a collection of fifty tales, anecdotes, and apologues in the oriental manner, written at the beginning of the 15th century. According to Ticknor's *History of Spanish Literature*, Per. i., ch. 4, it was not published until 1575.



a tree, said to his secretary: 'I should like to know what these ravens are saying to one another in their language.' 'My lord,' replied the secretary, 'your wishes may be gratified.' 'And how so?' asked Atalmuc. 'Because a dervish, who was a cabalist, has taught me the language of the birds,' rejoined Zeangir. 'If you desire it, I will listen to what these say, and repeat to you word for word what I may hear.'

"The vizir assented. The native of Cashmere got near the ravens, and pretended to pay attention to their discourse. Then returning to his master, he said: 'My lord, would you believe it? We are the subject of their conversation.' 'That is impossible!' exclaimed the Persian minister. 'And what do they say of us?' 'One of them,' replied the secretary, 'said: behold the grand vizir Atalmuc, the guardian eagle who covers Persia with his wings like a nest, and unceasingly watches for its preservation. As a relaxation from his wearisome labours, he is hunting in these woods with his faithful Zeangir. How happy must be that secretary to serve a master who shows so much kindness to him!' 'Gently!' interrupted the other raven, 'gently. Do not talk so much about the happiness of this young man. Atalmuc, it is true, converses familiarly with him, honours him with his confidence, and, no doubt, intends also



some day to give him an important post, but before he does so Zeangir shall have died of hunger. The poor fellow is lodging in a small furnished room, where he is in want of the common necessities. In a word, he leads a wretched life, though no one at court perceives it. The Grand Vizir never thinks of inquiring whether he is well off or not, and is satisfied with feeling kindly towards him, while he leaves him a prey to poverty.' " <sup>1</sup>

Here I stopped in order to hear what the Duke of Lerma would say. He asked me, with a smile, what impression this fable had produced on the mind of Atalmuc, and whether the Grand Vizir was not offended at his secretary's presumption. "No, my lord," I replied, "rather confused by his question; "on the contrary, the fable says that he overwhelmed him with favours." "That was fortunate," the Duke gravely replied; "there are some ministers who would not like to receive such lessons. But," he added, breaking off the conversation, and getting up, "I fancy the King will soon wake; and my duty demands my attendance." Whilst saying these words he strode rapidly towards the palace, without addressing another syllable to

<sup>1</sup> Lesage may have borrowed the idea of listening to the chattering of the birds from the *Conde Lucanor*; Addison, in his *Turkish Tale*, also mentions a vizir to Sultan Mahmoud, pretending "to understand the language of the birds."

me, and much put out, as I thought, by my Indian fable.

I followed him to the door of His Majesty's chamber, and then went to put back the papers which I had brought with me to where I had taken them from. I entered the room where our two copying secretaries were at work; for they also had come with us. "What is the matter with you, Señor de Santillana?" they said when they saw me. "You are very much disturbed. Has anything unpleasant happened?"

I was too agitated by the ill-success of my fable to conceal my grief. I told them what I had said to the duke, and they sympathized with the great affliction which I seemed to feel. "You have some reason to be sad," said one of them. "His Excellency sometimes takes things amiss." "That is but too true," remarked the other. "I hope you may be better treated than was one of Cardinal Spinosa's secretaries! This secretary, tired of receiving no pay during the fifteen months he had been employed by his eminence, took the liberty one day of representing his necessities to him, and of asking for a little money for his subsistence.' 'It is but just,' said the Cardinal, 'that you should be paid. Here,' he continued, putting into his hands an order for a thousand ducats, 'go and get this cashed at the royal treasury; but remember at the same time that I have no

further occasion for your services.' The secretary would have consoled himself for his dismissal if he had received his thousand ducats, and had been allowed to look for employment elsewhere; but as he left the Cardinal's house, he was arrested by an alguazil, and taken to the tower of Segovia, where he has been a prisoner for a long time.

This historical anecdote increased my terror. I thought myself lost; and, unable to console myself, I began to censure my impatience, as though I had not been sufficiently patient. "Alas!" I said, "why need I have ventured on that ill-starred fable which has displeased the minister? Perhaps he was on the point of extricating me from my miserable condition; perhaps even I was about to make one of those sudden fortunes which astonish everybody. What wealth, what honours have escaped me through my blundering! I ought to have reflected that great men dislike receiving hints, and that they wish us to regard as favours the slightest things which they are obliged to give away. It would have been better to have continued my frugality without informing the Duke of it; I ought even to have died of hunger in order to lay all the blame on him."

If I might still have retained any hope, my master, whom I saw after dinner, completely extinguished it. He was very grave with me, contrary to his wont, and did not address me

at all, which caused me great anxiety for the rest of the day. The night was not spent more peacefully. The regret at seeing my pleasant illusions vanish, and the fear of swelling the number of state prisoners, left no room but for sighs and lamentations.

The next day was the crisis of my fate. The Duke sent for me in the morning, and I entered his room, trembling like a criminal about to receive sentence. "Santillana," he said to me, showing me a paper which he held in his hand, "take this order. . ." I shuddered at the word 'order,' and said to myself, "O Heaven! here is Cardinal Spinoso over again; the carriage is ready to take me to Segovia." The terror which possessed me at this moment was such that I interrupted the minister, and cast myself at his feet. "My lord," I said to him, bathed in tears, "I most humbly entreat your Excellency to forgive my presumption; necessity alone compelled me to acquaint you with my wretched circumstances."

The Duke could not help laughing at my discomposure. "Do not be alarmed, Gil Blas," he replied, "and listen to me. Although to tell me of your needs was to reproach me for not having foreseen them, I do not take it amiss, my friend; I rather blame myself for not having inquired how you managed to live. But, by way of beginning to repair this want of thought, here is an order for fifteen hundred



ducats on the royal treasury, payable at sight. This is not all; I promise you the same sum every year; and moreover, when wealthy and generous persons shall ask you to use your influence, I do not object to your speaking to me on their behalf."

Enraptured by these words I kissed the Minister's feet, who, having commanded me to rise, continued to converse with me familiarly. I also tried to recover my cheerfulness, but could not so quickly pass from grief to joy. I was as much disturbed as a wretch who is informed of his pardon at the moment when he is expecting to receive the death-stroke. My master set down the whole of my agitation to the fear of having displeased him; though the dread of perpetual imprisonment had no less a share in it. He owned that he had pretended to be cool towards me, to see if I should deeply feel this alteration; that from this he judged of the depth of my attachment to his person, and that he liked me all the better for it.

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## CHAPTER VII.

THE GOOD USE GIL BLAS MADE OF HIS FIFTEEN HUNDRED DUCATS. THE FIRST AFFAIR IN WHICH HE INTERFERED, AND THE PROFIT WHICH HE DERIVED THEREFROM.

THE King, as though he wished to humour my impatience, returned to Madrid the very next day. I hastened at once to the royal treasury, where I forthwith received the sum mentioned in the order. It is rarely that the head of a beggar, who passes suddenly from poverty to opulence, is not turned. I changed suddenly with the alteration of my fortune; and listened no more to anything save to my ambition and my vanity; I abandoned my wretched room to those secretaries who still ignored the language of birds, and, for the second time, hired my grand suite of apartments, fortunately disengaged. I sent for a celebrated tailor, who worked for most of the gentlemen of fashion. He took my measure, and then, went with me to a shop, where he ordered five ells of cloth, which, he said, were necessary to make me a suit. Five ells for a Spanish suit! Good Heaven! . . . But let us not enlarge upon that; tailors in high repute always require more materials than others. I then bought some linen, of which I stood greatly in

need, some silk stockings, and a beaver fringed with Spanish lace.

After this, being unable to do without a footman, I asked Vincent Forero,<sup>1</sup> my landlord, to recommend me one. Most of the strangers who came to lodge with him, were wont, when they arrived in Madrid, to engage Spanish servants, which, of course, attracted to his house all the footmen out of place. The first who presented himself was a young fellow of so meek and pious an appearance that I would have nothing to do with him; he put me in mind of Ambrose de Lamela. "I dislike servants who look so sanctified," I said to Forero. "I have been taken in by them before."

I had hardly rejected this footman when I saw another come in. This one seemed to be very sprightly, bolder than a court page, and with a suggestion of roguishness in his looks. He took my fancy. His answers to my questions showed some intelligence; he evinced even a certain talent for intrigue. I thought he would suit me, and I engaged him. I had no cause to repent of my choice, and soon perceived that I had made a capital acquisition. As the Duke had permitted me to speak to him on behalf of persons to whom I wished to render a service, and as I intended not to neglect this permission, I needed a setter to start the

<sup>1</sup> According to Llorente this landlord was so called because *foreros*, or *forasteros*, strangers, lodged with him.

game—in other words, a fellow who would be up to his work, and able to unearth and bring to me people having favours to ask of the Prime Minister. This was the very qualification of Scipio, as my servant was named. He had lived last with Donna Anna de Guevara, the Prince of Spain's nurse, where he had had ample scope for practising this talent, as that lady was one of those persons, who, having influence at Court, like to turn it to some advantage.

As soon as I told Scipio that I had some interest at Court, he went to work; and that very same day he came to me and said: "Señor, I think I have unearthed some pretty fair business. A young gentleman from Grenada, whose name is Don Roger de Rada, has just come to Madrid. He has been engaged in an affair of honour which obliges him to solicit the protection of the Duke of Lerma, and is disposed to pay handsomely for any favour he may obtain. I have spoken to him. He was going to apply to Don Rodrigo de Calderon, whose influence has been extolled to him; but I induced him to change his mind, by giving him to understand that the secretary sold his good offices for more than their weight in gold, whereas you would be satisfied with any moderate expression of gratitude for yours, and would even do the business for nothing if you were in circumstances that permitted you to

follow your generous and disinterested inclination. In short, I talked to him in such a fashion that you will see this gentleman tomorrow morning as soon as you are up.” “Why, Master Scipio,” I said, “you have already done a good stroke of work! I can see that you are no novice in intrigues; I am astonished you are not the richer for it.” “That need not surprise you,” he replied; “I like to make money circulate and don’t hoard it.”

Accordingly Don Roger de Rada called on me, and I received him with a mixture of politeness and pride. “Worthy sir,” I said, “before I undertake to help you, I must know what affair of honour brings you to Court; for it might be such that I could not venture to speak to the Prime Minister in your favour. I beg, therefore, that you will give me a faithful account of it, and rest assured that I will warmly espouse your interests, if a man of honour can do so.” “I shall be glad to tell you my story, without keeping anything back,” the young gentleman from Grenada replied. And forthwith he began his adventures in the following words.

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## CHAPTER VIII.

## THE HISTORY OF DON ROGER DE RADA.

DON ANASTASIO DE RADA, a nobleman of Grenada, was living happily in the town of Antequera with Donna Estephania, his wife, who united unblemished virtue to a gentle nature and singular loveliness. If she loved her husband tenderly she was loved by him to distraction. He was naturally prone to jealousy; and though he had no cause to doubt his wife's fidelity, he was not free from anxiety, and dreaded lest some secret enemy of his peace should attack his honour. He mistrusted all his friends except Don Huberto de Hordales, who had free access to his house, as Estephania's cousin, and who was the only man whom he ought to have mistrusted.

Don Huberto, in fact, fell in love with his cousin, and ventured to declare his passion to her, unmindful of the relation existing between them, or of the feelings of friendship which Anastasio entertained for him. The lady, who was discreet, instead of making an outcry which might have led to fatal consequences, gently reproved her relative, represented to him how guilty he was in endeavouring to seduce her and to dishonour her husband, and said to him very seriously that he must not flatter himself with any hope of success.



This moderation only served the more to inflame this gentleman, who, fancying that a lady of such a character should be driven to the last extremity, began to adopt towards her manners far from respectful ; and one day had even the audacity to urge her to satisfy his desire. She repelled him sternly, and threatened to make Don Anastasio punish his rash presumption. The gallant, terrified by this menace, promised to speak to her no more of his love ; and on the faith of this promise, Estephania pardoned what had passed.

Don Huberto, who was by nature a man without any principles, could not see his passion thus ill requited without conceiving a cowardly desire for revenge. He knew that Don Anastasio was jealous, and susceptible to every impression which he desired to make upon him. This knowledge was sufficient to make him form the blackest design that any wretch ever conceived. One evening, as he was walking alone with this weak-minded husband, he said to him with a very sad air : “ My dear friend, I can no longer live without communicating to you a secret which I should not care to reveal, if your honour was not dearer to you than your peace of mind. A regard for your feelings of delicacy, as well as for my own, forbids me to hide from you what is going on in your house. Prepare to hear something which will cause you as much pain as surprise ;

I am about to wound you in your tenderest part."

"I understand you," Don Anastasio broke in, already greatly disturbed, "your cousin is faithless to me." "I no longer acknowledge her for my cousin," replied Hordales, with vehemence, "I disown her, as unworthy to be your wife." "You are keeping me too long in suspense," exclaimed Don Anastasio. "Speak, what has Estephania done?" "She has betrayed you," replied don Huberto. "You have a rival to whom she listens in private, but whose name I cannot give you; for the adulterer, favoured by the darkness of night, has eluded those who were on the watch for him. All I know is that you are deceived; and, of that I am certain. The interest I necessarily take in this matter is only too sure a pledge of the truth of my information. Since I myself accuse Estephania, I must be well convinced of her infidelity."

"It is useless," he continued, observing that his words produced their expected effect, "to tell you more. I can see that you are exasperated at the ingratitude with which she dares to return your love, and that you contemplate a just revenge. I will not oppose your design. Do not consider who is the victim you intend to strike; but show the whole town that there is nothing you would not sacrifice to your honour."

In this way the wretch exasperated a too credulous husband against an innocent wife, and depicted in such vivid colours the infamy in which the latter would be plunged if he left the insult unpunished, that he ended by driving him mad with rage. Don Anastasio's mind became completely overturned; the furies seemed to possess him; and he went home, determined to plunge a dagger into the heart of his unhappy wife, who was on the point of retiring to bed when he entered. He restrained himself for a time, and waited until the servants had retired. Then, checked neither by the fear of divine wrath nor by the dishonour which was about to recoil upon an honourable family, nor even by the natural affection which he ought to have felt for an infant which was expected to be born in about three months, he approached his victim and said to her in a voice full of rage: "Wretched woman, you must die. You have but a moment to live, and this my generosity accords you to pray Heaven to pardon the outrage which you have done me. I would not have you lose your soul—though you have lost your honour."

At these words he drew his dagger. His action and his speech terrified Estephania, who, casting herself at his knees, said to him with clasped hands, and in utter dismay: "What is the matter, Señor? What cause of complaint can I unhappily have given you to

drive you to this extremity? Why would you take the life of your wife? If you suspect her of unfaithfulness you are mistaken!"

"No, no," the jealous man hastily replied: "I am only too certain of your treachery; they who have informed me of it are worthy of belief. Don Huberto . . ." "Ah, Señor," she interrupted, hurriedly, "you ought not to trust Don Huberto; he is less your friend than you imagine. If he has told you anything against my honour, do not believe him." "Silence, infamous creature that you are!" replied Don Anastasio. "By seeking to warn me against Hordales, you confirm my suspicions instead of removing them. You try to make me suspect your relative because he is aware of your misconduct. You would gladly weaken his evidence against you, but this artifice is useless, and increases my desire to punish you." "My dear husband," rejoined the innocent Estephania, weeping bitterly, "beware of your blind wrath. If you obey its dictates, you will commit an act for which you will never forgive yourself when convinced of its injustice. In the name of Heaven calm your rage! At least, give yourself time to clear up your suspicions; you will then be doing more justice to a wife who has nothing to reproach herself with."

Anyone but Don Anastasio would have been touched by these words, and still more by the heartfelt grief with which she uttered them;



but the merciless man, far from being softened by them, again told the lady to commend herself quickly to Heaven, at the same time raising his hand to strike. "Stay, barbarous being!" she cried. "If your love for me is wholly extinguished; if the proofs of the affection which I have lavished on you are effaced from your memory; if my tears cannot turn you from your execrable purpose, have some respect for your own blood! Do not raise your frantic hand against an innocent creature who has not yet seen the light. You cannot be its destroyer without offending Heaven and earth. As for me, I can pardon you my own death, but be assured that its death will cry for vengeance for so terrible a crime."

However resolved Don Anastasio was to pay no heed to anything Estephania might say to him, he could not help being moved by the frightful picture which these last words presented to his mind. Therefore, as though he feared that his emotion might subdue his resentment, he hastened to take advantage of the fury which still raged within him, and plunged his dagger into his wife's right side. She fell to the ground; he believed her to be dead, and instantly quitting the house, disappeared from Antequerra.

Meanwhile this unfortunate wife was so stunned by the blow she had received that she remained for a short time where she had fallen,



without any signs of life. Then, recovering her consciousness, she brought by her groans and wailings an old female attendant to her assistance. When the good old woman saw her mistress in so pitiful a condition, she raised by her cries the other servants from their sleep, and even the neighbourhood. The room was soon crowded by spectators; and surgeons were called in, who dressed the wound, which they did not consider fatal. Their opinion turned out to be correct; in fact, Estephania was cured in a short time, and was safely delivered of a son three months after this cruel occurrence. That son, Señor Gil Blas, you now see before you; I am the issue of that sad birth.

Though scandal rarely spares the reputation of women, yet it respected my mother's; and this tragic event was considered in the town as a mere outbreak of fury of a jealous husband. It is true that my father bore the character of a violent man, and very liable to take offence on the slightest occasion. Hordales felt that his kinswoman would suspect him of disturbing the mind of Don Anastasio by false stories; and, content with being at least partly avenged upon her, he left off visiting her. Not to weary your lordship,<sup>1</sup> I will not dwell upon the details of my education. Suffice it to say, that my

<sup>1</sup> Don Roger de Rada wishes to flatter Gil Blas, and calls him *votre seigneurie*. See INTRODUCTORY NOTICE, Vol. I. p. xxxvii., 3°.

mother insisted on my being taught to fence, and that I studied that art for a long time in the most famous fencing-rooms of Grenada and Seville. She waited impatiently until I was of an age to measure swords with Don Huberto, before she informed me of her cause of complaint against him. When at length I had reached my eighteenth year she entrusted me with the secret, not without shedding many tears, and displaying the most acute grief. What an impression was produced by a mother, in such circumstances, upon a son, who is neither wanting in courage nor sympathy! I immediately went in search of Hordales, and led him to a retired spot, where, during a fight which lasted some time, I ran him three times through the body, until he fell upon the ground.

Don Huberto, feeling that he was mortally wounded, fixed his dying glance upon me, and declared that he received his death at my hands as a just punishment for the crime he had committed against my mother's honour. He confessed that in revenge for his love being despised he had determined to ruin her. Then he breathed his last, asking pardon for his crime from Heaven, from Don Anastasio, from Estephania, and from myself. I thought it better not to return home and acquaint my mother of what had happened; but leave her to learn it from public report. I crossed the

mountains, and reached the town of Malaga, where I embarked on board a privateer, which was on the point of starting. The captain, thinking that I looked like a man who was not deficient in courage, gladly consented that I should become one of his volunteers.

We were not long before we found an opportunity of distinguishing ourselves. Near the island of Albouran we fell in with a corsair from Melilla returning to the African shore with a Spanish ship, which he had captured off Carthage, with a valuable cargo. We attacked the African with spirit, and made ourselves masters of both his vessels, in which we found eighty Christians, whom he was taking as slaves to Barbary. Then, availing ourselves of a rising wind which drove us towards the coast of Grenada, we soon reached Punta de Helena.

As we were asking the rescued captives where they were born, I also put this question to a man of prepossessing appearance, and about fifty years of age, who answered with a sigh that he belonged to Antequerra. I felt an emotion at his reply which I could not explain; and my agitation, which he perceived, made an evident impression upon him. "I am a fellow-townsmen of yours," I said. "May I ask your family name?" "Alas," he replied, "you renew my grief by asking me to satisfy your curiosity. About eighteen years ago I left Antequerra, and I must be remembered

there only with horror. Perhaps my name has resounded but too often in your ears; it is Don Anastasio de Rada." "Righteous Heaven!" I exclaimed, "can I believe what I hear? Can this be? Are you Don Anastasio? Do I see my own father?" "What are you saying, young man?" he exclaimed in his turn, looking at me in amazement. "Can it be possible; and are you that unhappy infant, still in its mother's womb, when I sacrificed her to my rage?" "Yes, father," I said, "I am he whom the virtuous Estephania brought into the world three months after that fatal night when you left her weltering in her own blood."

Don Anastasio did not wait for me to finish these words before he threw himself on my neck. He clasped me in his arms, and for a quarter of an hour we mingled our sighs and tears. After having yielded to the tender emotions which such a recognition could not fail to excite in us, my father raised his eyes to Heaven to thank it for having saved the life of Estephania; but the next moment, as if still doubting whether it was a subject for which he ought to be grateful, he turned to me and asked how the innocence of his wife had been established. "Señor," I replied, "no one but you ever doubted it; her conduct was always beyond reproach. But I will undeceive you. Know that Don Huberto has imposed upon you." At the same time I told him all



the treachery of this kinsman, how I had taken vengeance on him, and his own confession to me when he was dying.

My father was less moved by the joy of recovering his liberty than by the news I had communicated to him. In the ecstasy of joy which transported him, he again embraced me tenderly. He was never weary of showing me how pleased he was with me. "Come, my son," said he, "let us hasten to Antequerra. I am burning with impatience to throw myself at the feet of a wife whom I have so unworthily treated. Since you have shown me my injustice, my heart has been torn by remorse."

I was too anxious to bring together those who were so dear to me to delay the happy moment. I left the privateer; and with my share of the prize money, bought two mules at Adra, my father being unwilling to expose himself again to the dangers of the sea. On the way he had abundant leisure to relate his adventures, and to these I listened with as eager an attention as was paid by the Prince of Ithaca to the narrative of his royal father.<sup>1</sup> At length, after having travelled several days, we reached the foot of the mountain near

<sup>1</sup> Fénelon's *Adventures of Telemachus, Prince of Ithaca*, were published in a complete and correct form in 1717, and produced a great sensation. The story of Don Roger de Rada first saw the light in 1724, in the third volume of *Gil Blas*.



Antequerra, and there halted. As we wished to enter our home privately, we did not go into the town until the middle of the night.

I leave you to imagine the astonishment of my mother at once more beholding the husband whom she thought she had lost for ever; the almost miraculous manner in which he was restored to her being another cause for amazement. He entreated her forgiveness for his barbarity with such genuine marks of repentance that she could not but be touched by them. Instead of looking on him as an assassin, she only saw the man to whom Heaven had given authority over her, so sacred is the name of husband to a virtuous woman! Estephania had been so anxious about me that she was delighted at my return; though her pleasure was not without alloy. A sister of Hordales had commenced proceedings in a court of justice against her brother's murderer, and everywhere had search made for me; so that my mother, not considering me in safety in our house, was not without anxiety. It was therefore necessary to set out for the court that very evening; and here I am come, Señor, to solicit my pardon, which I hope to obtain, if you are kind enough to speak on my behalf to the Prime Minister, and to support me with all your influence."

When the gallant son of Don Anastasio had finished his story, I said to him with an

air of importance : “ Enough, Don Roger ; the offence seems to me worthy of pardon. I will undertake to lay your case before his Excellency, whose protection I may venture to promise you.” On hearing this, the gentleman from Grenada grew voluble in his thanks, which would have entered by one ear and gone out at the other, if he had not assured me that any service which I might render him should be quickly followed by proofs of his gratitude. As soon as he had touched that cord I set to work. On the same day I related his history to the Duke, who, having permitted me to present the gentleman, said to him : “ Don Roger, I have been informed of the affair of honour which has brought you to court ; Santillana has communicated to me all the particulars. Be at ease ; you have done nothing but what may be excused ; it is especially to noblemen who avenge their offended honour that His Majesty is pleased to extend his pardon. For form’s sake you must go to prison ; but you may depend upon it, you shall not stay there long. In Santillana you have a good friend who will look after what is necessary, and soon obtain your release.

Don Roger made a low bow to the minister, on whose word he went and surrendered himself. By my exertions his letters of pardon were soon made ready ; and in less than ten days I sent this modern Telemachus home to

his Ulysses and his Penelope,<sup>1</sup> whereas if he had had no protector and no money, he would perhaps scarcely have got off with less than a year's imprisonment. However, the service I rendered him brought me in no more than a hundred pistoles. This was no great haul, but I was not yet a Calderon to despise small ones.

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## CHAPTER IX.

HOW GIL BLAS MADE A CONSIDERABLE FORTUNE IN  
A SHORT TIME, AND WHAT AIRS HE GAVE  
HIMSELF.

THIS affair sharpened my appetite; and ten pistoles which I gave to Scipio for his commission encouraged him to search again for fresh customers. I have already praised his capacities in this respect; so he might fairly have been called Scipio the Great. The second customer he brought me was a printer of books on chivalry, who had enriched himself in spite of common sense. This printer had pirated the work of one of his rivals, and his edition had been seized; but on his giving me three hundred ducats I contrived that the books should be returned to him, and saved him from a heavy fine. Though this was not a

<sup>1</sup> See page 58, note 1.

transaction for the Prime Minister, his Excellency, at my request, condescended to interpose his authority. After the printer a merchant passed through my hands, whose business was as follows. A Portuguese vessel had been taken by a Barbary corsair, and re-captured by a privateer from Cadiz. Two-thirds of the cargo belonged to a Lisbon merchant, who, having vainly claimed his property, came to the Spanish Court to seek a protector with sufficient influence to have it restored to him. He was fortunate enough to find one in me. I interested myself on his behalf, and he recovered his property, in consideration of a sum of four hundred pistoles, which he paid me for my patronage.

Here I seem to hear the reader exclaim—  
“Bravo, Sir Santillana! Feather your nest well;<sup>1</sup> you are on the right road; make the most of your luck.” O! let me alone for that! If I am not mistaken I see my valet coming with a new fellow whom he has just hooked. Yes, it is Scipio; let us hear what he has to say. “Señor,” says he, “permit me to present to you this eminent practitioner. He wants to have the permission to sell his medicines for ten years in all the towns in the Spanish dominions, to the exclusion of all other members of his profession, who shall be forbidden

<sup>1</sup> In the original, *mettez du foin dans vos bottes*; put some hay in your boots.



from settling in the places where he may reside. As an acknowledgment he will give two hundred pistoles to any one who shall procure him the said privilege." I said to the mountebank, assuming the air of a patron, "You can go, my friend, your business shall be done." And really, a few days afterwards, I sent him away with his patents, which gave him an exclusive right to gull people through the length and breadth of the Spanish dominions.<sup>1</sup>

I was experiencing the truth of the proverb that the more one gets the more one wants,<sup>2</sup> Not only did I feel more greedy, the richer I became, but I had so readily obtained from his Excellency the four favours just mentioned, that I did not hesitate to ask him for a fifth, which was the governorship of the town of Vera, on the coast of Grenada, for a knight of the order of Calatrava, for which he was willing to pay me a thousand pistoles. The minister began to laugh when he saw me so eager. "Egad, friend Gil Blas," he said, "you are going the pace! You are desperately fond of obliging your fellow-creatures. But mark me! When it is only a question of trifles, I shall not look too closely into it; but when you want governorships or other considerable

<sup>1</sup> In France, the permission granted to quacks for vending their medicines was during the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries sold for the benefit of the first physician of the king.

<sup>2</sup> In French, *l'appétit vient en mangeant*; the appetite grows by what it feeds on.



favours, you must please be content with one half the profits, and account to me for the other half. You cannot imagine," he continued, "the compulsory expense I am at, nor how many resources I need to sustain the dignity of my office; for, though I display disinterestedness before the world, I will confess to you that I am not imprudent enough voluntarily to involve my domestic affairs. Take your measures accordingly."

My master having by this speech relieved me of the fear of being importunate, or rather, having stimulated me to return frequently to the charge, made me hanker still more after wealth than before. I would thenceforth willingly have advertised that all who wished to obtain favours at Court had only to apply to me. I went one way, Scipio another. I asked for nothing better than to please people for their money. My Knight of Calatrava got his governorship of Vera for his thousand pistoles; and I soon obtained another at the same price for a Knight of Saint Iago. I was not satisfied with making governors; I also conferred orders of knighthood, and converted sundry good plebeians into sorry noblemen by virtue of excellent patents of nobility. Moreover, I also liked the clergy to experience my good offices; I distributed small livings, canonries, and a few ecclesiastical dignities. As for bishoprics and archbishoprics, Don

Rodrigo de Calderon had the appointing of them. He also nominated to magistracies, commanderies, and vice-royalties ; from which it may be concluded that the higher offices were no better filled than the lower ones ; for the personages whom we chose to occupy the situations, out of which we drove such an honourable trade, were not always the cleverest people in the world, nor yet the steadiest. We knew very well that the wits of Madrid made themselves merry at our expense ; but we were like misers who console themselves for public scorn by the sight of their gold.

Isocrates was in the right to say that intemperance and folly are the inseparable companions of the wealthy. When I found myself the owner of thirty thousand ducats, and in a fair way to get, perhaps, ten times as much, I thought I ought to assume a style of living worthy of the confidant of the Prime Minister. I hired a mansion, which I furnished handsomely, bought the carriage of a notary<sup>1</sup> who kept it through ostentation, and who was trying to get rid of it, at his baker's suggestion—engaged a coachman and three footmen ; and as it is right to promote one's old servants, I raised Scipio to the triple honour of being my valet, secretary, and factotum. But what put the finishing touch to my pride was the minister's allowing my people to wear

<sup>1</sup> In the original Lesage has the Spanish word *escrivano*.

his livery.<sup>1</sup> I lost the little discretion I had left; and was hardly less foolish that the disciples of Porcius Latro,<sup>2</sup> who having made themselves as pale as their master by drinking decoctions of cumin, thought themselves every whit as learned. I almost believed myself a relative of the Duke of Lerma. I fancied that I might pass for such, or perhaps for one of his bastards; an idea which pleased me vastly.

Moreover, in imitation of his Excellency, who kept open house, I also resolved to entertain. To this end I bade Scipio find me out a clever cook, and he discovered one who was, perhaps, comparable with the cook of the Roman Nomentanus, of dainty memory.<sup>3</sup> I filled my

<sup>1</sup> See also bk. xi., chap. 6. F. Aarsens van Sommelsdyk, who was in Spain in 1655, says in his *Voyage*, that the servants always dressed in black, and wore a stripe on their sleeve; but the Countess d'Aulnoy writes in 1679, in the eighth letter of her *Relation*: "Only ambassadors and foreigners may be followed by a great number of pages and lackeys . . . for it is forbidden to be accompanied by more than two . . . I have seen lackeys more than fifty years old, and none less than thirty; they are disagreeable looking, yellow, and dirty. Their hair is cut in such a manner . . . that it makes them appear like wild boars. They wear large swords in baldricks, and a cloak; they are all dressed in blue or green, and often their green cloth cloaks are lined with flowered blue velvet; their sleeves are of velvet, satin, or damask . . . Their bad looks disgrace the livery they wear."

<sup>2</sup> Porcius Latro was a famous Roman orator who committed suicide during a fever, 780.

<sup>3</sup> Lucius Cassius Nomentanus, a celebrated Roman epicure, lived in the Augustan age, and spent a large fortune in eating and drinking. Horace has immortalised in his *Satires* his profusion, his splendour, and his gluttony.

cellar with the choicest wines, and after having laid in all other necessary articles, I began to receive company. Every evening there supped with me some of the principal clerks of the public offices, who haughtily assumed the character of Secretaries of State. I provided them with very good cheer, and always sent them away with their thirst well quenched. Scipio, on his part—for it was “like master like man”—also kept his table in the servant’s hall, where he treated his acquaintances at my cost. But I liked this young fellow, and as he assisted me in gaining money, it seemed right that he should help me to spend it. Moreover, I looked upon this profusion from a young man’s point of view, and could not see that it did me any harm; I only thought of the glory it brought me. Another reason, too, prevented me from using caution; livings and official situations did not cease to bring grist to the mill. I found my finances increase day by day, and thought that I had at last fixed Fortune’s wheel.

Nothing now was wanting to gratify my vanity but that Fabricio should witness my sumptuous way of living. Most probably he had returned from Andalusia; and to give myself the pleasure of astonishing him, I sent him an anonymous note, informing him that a Sicilian nobleman of his acquaintance would be glad of his company to supper. I named the



day and the hour, and appointed my own house as the place of meeting. Nunez came, and was extremely astonished to learn that I was the foreign nobleman who had invited him. "Yes, my friend," said I, "I am the master of this house, and keep a carriage, a good table, and, moreover, a strong box." "Is it possible," he exclaimed with vivacity, "that I find you again in opulence? How pleased I am to have recommended you to Count Galiano! I told you beforehand that he was a generous nobleman; and that he would soon place you in easy circumstances. No doubt," he added, "you followed the wise advice I gave you to be a little easier with the butler. I congratulate you; it is only by such a discreet behaviour that stewards thrive so well in great families."

I let Fabricio compliment himself as much as he chose for having got me into Count Galiano's service. When he had done, and in order to qualify the joy he felt at having procured me so good a post, I stated to him at full length the marks of gratitude with which that nobleman had repaid my services. But, perceiving that my poet was inwardly making his recantation whilst I gave him these details, I said to him, "I pardon the Sicilian's ingratitude. Between ourselves, I have rather cause to rejoice than to complain of it. If the Count had not used me badly I should have followed



him to Sicily, where I should still be serving him in the hope of an uncertain establishment. In a word, I should not now be the confidant of the Duke of Lerma."

Nunez was so much struck by these last words that he remained for some seconds unable to utter a syllable. Then suddenly breaking silence, he said, "Did I understand you rightly? What! are you in the confidence of the Prime Minister?" "I share it," replied I, "with Don Rodrigo de Calderon; and according to all appearance I shall still progress." "Verily, Señor de Santillana," he replied, "I admire you; you are capable of filling every sort of post. How many talents are united in your own person. To use an expression of the tennis court, you have a racket with which you can do whatever you wish,<sup>1</sup> which means, that you are fit for anything. In short, Señor, I am delighted by your lordship's prosperity."<sup>2</sup> "O, the deuce! Mr Nunez," I interrupted, "a truce to your 'Señor' and 'your lordship'! Let us drop such titles, and always live together on familiar terms." "You are right," he answered; "I ought not to look differently upon you, although you have become rich; but," added he, "I will acknowledge

<sup>1</sup> In the original Lesage has *vous avez l'outil universel*, with the two last words printed in italics, which seems to indicate a technical term, at that time in use.

<sup>2</sup> For the use of "your lordship," *votre seigneurie*, see the INTRODUCTORY NOTICE, vol. i. p. xxxvii. 4°.

my weakness; when you informed me of your prosperity you dazzled me; fortunately that impression is over, and now I see in you only my friend Gil Blas."

Our conversation was interrupted by the arrival of four or five clerks. "Gentlemen," I said, introducing Nunez to them, "you are to sup with Señor Don Fabricio, who composes verses worthy of King Numa,<sup>1</sup> and whose prose is unrivalled." Unfortunately I was speaking to persons who thought so little of poetry that the poet suffered for it. They hardly condescended to cast their eyes upon him. In vain he uttered some very witty sayings to attract their attention; they did not appreciate them. He was so nettled at their indifference that he made use of a poetical licence, quietly withdrew from the company, and disappeared. Our clerks did not notice his departure, and sat down to table, without even inquiring what had become of him.

Next morning, as I was finishing my toilet, and preparing to go out, the Asturian poet entered my room. "I beg your pardon, my friend," he said, "if I insulted your clerks last night, but to tell you the truth, I found myself so much out of my element that I could not stand it. What fastidious fellows they are, with their self-sufficient, stuck-up airs! I

<sup>1</sup> The obscure verses sung by the Salian priests in their processions were composed by Numa. (Note by Lesage).

cannot understand how a clever man like you can put up with such dull guests. I should like, this very day, to bring you some with more life and spirit." "You will be doing me a favour," I replied, "and I rely upon your taste in the matter." "You may do so," he rejoined, "I promise you superior geniuses, and most amusing fellows. I will go forthwith to a tavern where they will presently meet, and will bespeak them, lest they should engage themselves elsewhere, for they are in great request at dinner or supper; they are so very amusing."

With these words he left me; and in the evening, at supper time, he returned in the company of not more than six authors, whom he presented to me one after another, vaunting the merits of each. According to him these wits surpassed those of Greece and Italy; and their works, he said, deserved to be printed in letters of gold. I received these gentlemen very politely; and even affected to overwhelm them with civilities, for the race of authors is somewhat vain and conceited. Though I had not bidden Scipio provide an abundant feast, yet as he knew the sort of men I was to entertain that evening, he had largely increased our supplies.

At length we sat down to table in high spirits. My poets began to talk about their works and to praise themselves. One proudly

mentioned the great lords and ladies of quality whom his muse delighted. Another found fault with the choice which a literary academy had just made of two members, saying modestly that he ought to have been chosen. There was just as much presumption in the talk of the rest. In the very middle of supper they almost harassed me to death with their verse and their prose, reciting, one after another, a specimen of their writings. The first spouted a sonnet, the second declaimed a scene from a tragedy, and a third read a criticism on a certain comedy. A fourth, being about in his turn to read an ode of Anacreon, translated into bad Spanish verse, was interrupted by one of his colleagues, who told him he had employed an incorrect term. The author of the version by no means acquiesced in this; and thereupon a dispute arose in which all the wits took sides. Opinions were divided, the disputants grew warm; they came to invective, which might have been endured, but these madmen rose from the table and fell to blows. Fabricio, Scipio, my coachman, my footmen, and myself had no little difficulty in making them stop. When we had parted them, they left my house, as if it had been a tavern, without the smallest apology for their want of politeness.

I had anticipated a very pleasant supper party, according to what Nunez had told me ;



but the latter was much disconcerted by this adventure. "Well, my friend," I said to him, "will you still extol your company? On my word you have brought me some sorry creatures! I will keep to my clerks; talk to me no more about authors." "I shall take care not to introduce any others to you," he said; "for you have just seen the most sensible of the whole lot."

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## CHAPTER X.

THE MORALS OF GIL BLAS BECOME WHOLLY CORRUPTED AT COURT. OF THE COMMISSION WITH WHICH HE WAS ENTRUSTED BY THE COUNT OF LEMOS, AND OF THE INTRIGUE IN WHICH THAT NOBLEMAN AND HE ENGAGED.

WHEN I was known to be highly esteemed by the Duke of Lerma, I soon had a court about me. Every morning my antechamber was full of people, and I gave audiences at my levee. Two sorts of persons came to me; some to induce me, for a price, to ask favours of the minister, and others, to move me by their supplications, to obtain what they wanted gratuitously. The first were sure of being heard and well attended to; as for the second, I immediately got rid of them by excuses, or



else I played with them so long that they lost patience. Before I came to court I was naturally compassionate and charitable; but such human weaknesses do not exist there, and my heart became harder than flint. Thus I was, of course, cured of my sympathy with my friends; and I lost all my affection for them. The way in which I treated Joseph Navarro, in circumstances which I am about to relate, will prove this.

This Navarro, to whom I owed so much, and who, in a word, was the prime cause of my fortune, came to visit me one day, and after assuring me of his great regard, as he usually did whenever he saw me, begged me to ask the Duke of Lerma for a certain situation for one of his friends, adding that the gentleman for whom he appealed to me was a very amiable and meritorious young fellow, but that he needed a post to enable him to live. "I am convinced," said Joseph, "kind and obliging as I know you to be, that you will be delighted to confer a favour on a worthy gentleman who is far from wealthy. His poverty is a claim upon your support; and I feel assured that you will thank me for giving you an opportunity of displaying your generosity." This was frankly telling me that he expected this service from me for nothing. Although this was hardly to my taste, I still appeared quite inclined to do what he requested. "I am de-

lighted," I replied to Navarro, "to be able to give you a proof of the deep gratitude which I feel for all you have done for me. The interest you feel in anyone is sufficient for me, and nothing more is necessary to induce me to serve him. Your friend shall get the place you wish him to have; you may reckon on it. It is no longer your affair, but my own."

With this assurance Joseph went away greatly pleased with me; nevertheless the person he recommended did not get the post that had been mentioned. I secured it for another man in return for a thousand ducats, which I put into my strong box, preferring this sum to the thanks which the clerk of the kitchen would have given me. When we met next I said to him, with an appearance of mortification: "Ah, my dear Navarro! you spoke to me too late; Calderon had anticipated me, and had already given that place away. I am in despair to have no better news for you."

Joseph implicitly believed me, and we parted better friends than ever; but I fancy he soon discovered the truth, for he never came near me again. Instead of feeling any remorse at having treated in such a way a genuine friend to whom I was so much indebted, I was in reality delighted. Not only did the services which he had rendered me weigh upon me, but it seemed that, in the position which I held

then at Court, it was no longer becoming in me to be intimate with stewards.

It is a good while since I mentioned the Count of Lemos; let us now return to that nobleman. We met occasionally, and, as I have already stated, I had taken him a thousand pistoles. I took him another thousand, by order of his uncle, the Duke, out of the money in my hands, belonging to his Excellency. The Count of Lemos chose on this occasion to have a long conversation with me. He told me that he had at length obtained what he wanted, and had completely won the Prince of Spain's good graces, whose sole confidant he had become. He then entrusted me with a very honourable commission, of which he had already given me a hint—"Friend Santillana," he said, "we must now set to work. Spare no pains to discover some young beauty worthy of amusing this gallant prince. You are intelligent; I need say no more. Go, run about and search everywhere, and when you have made some lucky discovery, come and let me know." I promised the Count to neglect nothing in the due discharge of my employment, which seems not to be very difficult, since so many people dabble in it.

I had no great experience in inquiries of this kind, but I made no doubt that Scipio would be an adept in this respect also. On my return home I sent for him, and said to him

privately—"My lad, I have an important secret to tell you. Do you know that amidst all the favours of fortune I feel that there is still something wanting to me?" "I can easily guess what that is," he broke in, without giving me time to finish what I was going to say; "you want a pleasant lady to amuse and cheer you up a little. And, in fact, it is a wonderful thing that you should not have got one in the spring of your life, whilst solemn grey-beards cannot do without one." "I admire your penetration," I replied to him with a smile. "Yes, my friend, a mistress is what I want, and you shall recommend her to me. But I warn you that I am very difficult to satisfy in this respect. I require a pretty girl, with passable manners and morals." "What you require," rejoined Scipio, smiling, "is somewhat rare. However, thank Heaven, we live in a town where there are some of all sorts; and I am in hopes that it will not be long before I shall suit you."

In fact, three days later he said to me: "I have discovered a treasure. A young lady, named Catalina, of good family and matchless beauty, lives with her aunt in a small house, where they both dwell together respectably, and spend their small income. I have made the acquaintance of their maid, who has just assured me that their door, though barred against all, might be opened to a rich and



liberal gallant, provided that, in order to avoid scandal, he would come to them only after nightfall, and by stealth. Hereupon, I described you as a gentleman who deserved to have the door opened for him, and I begged the maid to propose you to the two ladies. She promised me to do so, and to bring me back their answer to-morrow morning at an appointed place." "That is capital," I replied; "but I fear the maid to whom you spoke has been misleading you." "No, no," he rejoined, "I am not the sort of man to be so easily taken in. I have already made inquiries in the neighbourhood, and from what has been told me I conclude that Señora Catalina is all you could desire, to wit, a Danae to whom you will be allowed to play the Jupiter, by virtue of the shower of pistoles which will rain down upon her."

Prepossessed as I was against such intrigues, I resolved to engage in this one; and as the maid came next day and told Scipio that I might, if I liked, be introduced that very evening to her mistresses, I stole thither between eleven o'clock and midnight. The maid received me in the dark, and took me by the hand to conduct me into a rather handsome room, where the two ladies, richly attired, were seated on satin cushions.<sup>1</sup> When they saw me, they rose and welcomed me

<sup>1</sup> See vol. i., bk. 3, ch. ix. p. 313, note i.



so affably that I took them for ladies of the highest rank. The aunt, who was called Señora Mencía, although still good looking, did not attract my attention ; for, in fact, one could not help gazing on the niece, who seemed nothing less than a goddess. Looking at her closely, indeed, it might have been seen that she was not a perfect beauty ; but, then, there was an unquestionable charm about her, as well as a piquant and voluptuous air which scarcely permitted a man to perceive her defects.

The sight of her greatly disturbed me ; I forgot that I had come only as a deputy ; I addressed her on my own individual account, and used the language of an impassioned man. The little creature, whom I thought thrice as intelligent as she really was, so lovely did she seem to me, quite enchanted me by her replies. I was beginning to lose all my self-command, when the aunt, in order to moderate my transports, said : “ My lord of Santillana, I shall deal frankly with you. On account of the praise I have heard of your lordship,<sup>1</sup> you have been permitted to enter our house, without my pretending to enhance this favour by standing on ceremony ; but still you must not suppose that you are any the further advanced for that. Hitherto I have brought up my niece

<sup>1</sup> See vol. i., INTRODUCTORY NOTICE, p. xxxvii., 5°, for Señora Mencía addressing Gil Blas as “ your lordship,” *votre seigneurie*.

in retirement, and you are virtually the first gentleman whom she has ever set eyes on. If you deem her worthy of being your wife, I shall be delighted that she should be thus honoured. It is for you to consider whether those terms suit you ; for you will not have her on any other.”

This home-thrust frightened Cupid, who was on the point of discharging a shaft at me. Metaphor apart, a marriage so bluntly proposed made me recover my senses ; and I at once became again the faithful agent of the Count of Lemos. Changing my tone I replied to Señora Mencia : “ Madam, your frankness pleases me, and I will imitate it. Whatever figure I may make at court, I am not worthy of the incomparable Catalina. For her I have a more brilliant fate in view ; I destine her for the Prince of Spain.” “ To refuse my niece’s hand is enough,” the aunt coldly replied ; “ I think this refusal sufficiently impolite, without it being necessary to accompany it by a jest.” “ I am not jesting, madam,” I cried ; “ nothing could be more serious. I am commissioned to look out for a lady worthy of being honoured by the private visits of the Prince of Spain ; I find her in your house, and set my mark on it accordingly.”<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> The original has *je vous marque à la craie*, I mark you with chalk, because when the French King and Court were travelling, the *maréchaux des logis* and the *fourriers de la cour* marked with chalk the different apartments where the monarch and the courtiers had to lodge.

Señora Mencia was much astonished to hear these words ; and I could see that they did not displease her. But thinking it necessary to assume an air of reserve, she answered me thus —“ If I were to take what you say literally, I would have you know that I am not a woman to rejoice in the infamous honour of seeing my niece the mistress of the Prince. Every feeling of virtue revolts at the idea . . .” “ What a simpleton you are with your virtue !” I interrupted. “ You argue like a foolish citizen’s wife. Are you joking, to look at matters of this kind from a moral point of view ? It is stripping them of all their beauty ; you should regard them with an enraptured eye. Picture the heir of the crown at the feet of the happy Catalina ; imagine that he adores her, floods her with presents, and think, finally, that from her, perhaps, will spring a hero who will render his mother’s name immortal with his own.”

Though the aunt wanted nothing better than to accept my proposal, she pretended inability to decide, and Catalina, who longed to have the Prince already in her chains, assumed a lofty indifference. Therefore, I was obliged to renew my efforts, until at last Señora Mencia, seeing that I was dispirited, and disposed to raise the siege, sounded a parley ; and we drew up terms of capitulation, containing the two following clauses : *primo*, if the Prince of Spain, on the report made to him of Catalina’s

charms, should become impassioned, and resolve to pay her a visit by night, I was to take care to inform the ladies of this, as well as of the night selected for that purpose; *secundo*, that the Prince was only to be introduced to the ladies as a private gentleman, unaccompanied by any one save by myself, and his principal love-agent.

After this convention the aunt and niece were on the most friendly terms with me; they assumed a familiar manner, on the strength of which I ventured a few embraces, which were not at all taken unkindly; and when we parted they embraced me of their own accord, and loaded me with all kinds of caresses. It is wonderful how easily an intimacy is formed between brokers of gallantry and women who have need of them. Any person who had seen me depart amidst such favours would have said that I had been happier than I really had.

The Count of Lemos was greatly delighted when I told him that I had made a discovery, such as he desired. I spoke to him of Catalina in terms which made him anxious to see her; so I took him to her house the next night, and he acknowledged that I had been highly successful. He told the ladies that he had no doubt whatever that the Prince of Spain would be fully satisfied with the mistress I had chosen for him; and that she, on her side, would have cause to be well pleased with such a lover, as



the young Prince was generous, good-tempered, and kind-hearted. In short, he assured them that in a few days he would bring him to their house in the manner they wished, that is, privately and without attendance. That nobleman then took leave of them, and I also withdrew. We returned to his carriage, in which we had come, and which was waiting for us at the end of the street. Then he set me down at my own door, bidding me to give his uncle next morning all the details of this newly begun adventure, and to ask him, in his name, to send a thousand pistoles in order to ensure its success.

I did not fail next day to give the Duke of Lerma an exact account of all that had passed, and kept back but one thing, for I did not mention Scipio's name; but pretended to have discovered Catalina myself; among the great we must take credit for everything.

Hereupon I drew down the most honeyed compliments. "Mr Gil Blas," the minister said with a bantering air, "I am delighted that in addition to all your other talents, you have also that of unearthing kind-hearted beauties! Whenever I have a fancy for any, you will allow me to apply to you." "My lord," I replied in the same tone, "I thank you for the preference; but you will permit me to say that I should scruple to provide your Excellency with pleasures of this description. The worthy Don Rodrigo has been so long in possession of those functions that it



would be unjust to deprive him of them." The Duke smiled at my repartee; then, changing the subject, he asked me if his nephew did not want money for this frolic. "Excuse me," I said, "he begs you to send him a thousand pistoles." "Well," replied the minister, "you have only to take them to him. Tell him not to be sparing of them, and to encourage all the expenses in which the Prince desires to indulge."

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## CHAPTER XI.

THE PRINCE OF SPAIN'S PRIVATE VISIT TO CATALINA,  
AND THE PRESENTS HE MADE TO HER.

I WENT at once with five hundred double pistoles to the Count of Lemos. "You could not have come at a better time," said his lordship. "I have just spoken to the Prince; he has taken the bait, and burns with impatience to see Catalina. This very night he intends to slip privately out of the palace to pay her a visit. It is resolved upon; our measures are already taken accordingly. Inform the ladies that we are coming, and give them the money which you have brought. It is as well to let them see that it is no ordinary lover whom they are to receive; besides, the favours of

princes ought to precede their gallantries. As you will accompany him as well as myself," he added, "take care to be in the way to-night, at bed-time. Moreover, as I think it best to make use of your carriage, let it wait for us near the palace about midnight."

I immediately went to the ladies. I did not see Catalina; I was told that she was lying down; so I spoke only with Señora Mencia. "Madam," I said to her, "pray excuse me for appearing at your house in the day time; but I could not do otherwise. I have to inform you that the Prince of Spain will be with you to-night; and here," I added, placing in her hands a bag containing the coin, "is an offering which he lays on the shrine of Cythera in order to render the divinities propitious. As you may perceive, I have not engaged you in a bad speculation." "I am much obliged to you," she replied, "but tell me, Señor de Santillana, does the Prince like music?" "He loves it to distraction," I rejoined. "Nothing pleases him so much as a fine voice, accompanied by a well-played lute." "So much the better," she exclaimed, in a transport of delight; "you charm me by telling me that, for my niece has the voice of a nightingale and plays the lute divinely: she also dances to perfection." "Heavens!" I exclaimed, in my turn, "what a number of perfections, aunt! A girl does not want so many to make her fortune; any

one of these talents would have been sufficient."

Having thus prepared the way, I waited for the Prince's bed-time. When it was near at hand, I gave my coachman his orders, and went back to the Count of Lemos, who told me that the Prince, to get rid the sooner of everybody, would feign a slight indisposition, and even go to bed, in order to give convincing proof of his illness; but that he would get up an hour afterwards, and go through a private door to a back staircase leading into the court-yards.

After he had informed me what they both had agreed upon, he bade me wait in a place where he said they should pass. I stood there so long<sup>1</sup> that I began to fancy that our gallant had taken another road, or lost his desire to see Catalina; just as if princes lost whims of this sort before they were satisfied! At last I was beginning to think that I had been forgotten, when two men came up and addressed me. Having recognised them as those for whom I was waiting, I led the way to my carriage, in which they both seated themselves, whilst I had to sit by the coachman, in order to direct him. I made him stop about fifty yards from the ladies' house; then, gave my hand to the Prince and his companion, to

<sup>1</sup> The original has *J'y gardai si longtemps le mulet*. See vol. ii., bk. iv., ch. 1, p. 9, note 1.

assist them to get out, and walked with them to the house which we wished to enter. The door opened at our approach, and was closed again as soon as we had gone in.

At first everything was as dark as it had been on my first visit; although, indeed, by way of distinction, a little lamp had been fixed to the wall. Its light was so dim that we merely saw it, without deriving any advantage from it. All this served only to make the adventure more agreeable to its hero, who, as soon as he came in the drawing-room, where the ladies received him, and where the glare of a large number of candles made up for the darkness of the court-yard, was vastly struck by them. The aunt and her niece were in a pretty undress, so coquettishly arranged that nobody could look at them with impunity. Our prince would have been well pleased with Señora Mencia if there had been no other choice; but the charms of the youthful Catalina, as was natural, had the preference.

“Well, Prince,” the Count of Lemos said to him, “could you have wished us to show you two more lovely ladies?” “They are both enchanting,” replied the Prince, “and I cannot help leaving my heart here; for it would not escape the aunt if the niece could fail to secure it.”

After such a pretty compliment to the aunt he said a thousand flattering things to Catalina,



who answered him very cleverly. As it is permitted to worthy people, who play the part I was then playing, to mingle in the conversation of lovers, provided it be to add fuel to the fire, I said to the gallant that his nymph sang and played the lute divinely. He was charmed to hear that she possessed these talents, and urged her to give him a specimen of them. She yielded to his entreaties with a good grace, took up a lute ready tuned, played a few tender airs, and sang so touchingly that the Prince went down on his knees in a transport of love and pleasure. But let us no longer linger over this picture, but merely say that, in the sweet intoxication in which the heir to the Spanish crown was plunged, the hours flew like moments, till the approach of day obliged us to tear him from this dangerous house. The worthy go-betweens took him quickly back to the palace, and into his apartments. They then retired to their own houses, as pleased at having mated him with an adventuress as if they had negotiated his marriage with a princess.

Next morning I related this adventure to the Duke of Lerma, who wanted to know all the particulars. As I was finishing my narrative the Count of Lemos came in, and said to us—"The Prince of Spain's mind is so occupied by Catalina, and he has taken such a fancy to her, that he intends to see her fre-



quently, and attach himself to her alone. He would like to have sent her to-day a couple of thousand pistoles worth of jewels; but he has no money, and has applied to me in these words: 'My dear Lemos, you must find me this sum at once. I am quite aware that I am giving you trouble, and that I am draining your resources: but I shall be very grateful to you for it; and if I ever find myself able to acknowledge all that you have done for me, more effectually than by mere words, you shall not repent of having obliged me.' 'Prince,' I replied, as I at once took leave of him, 'I have friends and credit, and will go and bring you what you desire.' "

"There is no difficulty about satisfying him," the Duke said to his nephew. "Santillana will take you the money; or rather, if you like, he shall himself purchase the jewels; for he is an admirable judge, especially of rubies. Is it not so, Gil Blas?" he added, looking at me with a satirical smile. "How sarcastic your grace is," I replied, "I can see you want to make the Count laugh at my expense." And so he did, for the nephew asked what the mystery was. "No mystery at all," answered his uncle, laughing. "Only one day Santillana took it into his head to exchange a diamond for a ruby, and gained neither honour nor profit by the exchange."

I should have been very glad if the minister

had said no more ; but he took the trouble to relate the trick which Camilla and Don Raphael had played on me in the furnished lodgings, dwelling especially upon the parts which told most against me.<sup>1</sup> After having very much enjoyed the joke, his Excellency bade me accompany the Count of Lemos, who took me to a jeweller's, where we selected some trinkets, which we afterwards showed to the Prince of Spain ; they were then entrusted to my care to be taken to Catalina. The next thing I did was to go to my house, to get two thousand pistoles belonging to the Duke, wherewith to pay the jeweller.

There is no need to ask whether I was affably received by the ladies on the following night, when I displayed to them the presents I brought them, consisting of a handsome pair of earrings, with drops, for the niece. They were both delighted by these marks of the Prince's love and generosity ; they began to chatter like a couple of gossips, and to thank me for having introduced them to such a valuable acquaintance. In the excess of their joy they forgot themselves, and certain words escaped them which made me suspect that I had only discovered some wench or other for the son of our grand monarch. To ascertain precisely whether I had done such a brilliant thing, I withdrew, resolved to have an explanation with Scipio.

<sup>1</sup> See vol. i., bk. i., ch. 16.





## CHAPTER XII.

WHO CATALINA WAS. THE AWKWARD POSITION OF GIL BLAS, HIS ANXIETY, AND THE PRECAUTIONS HE WAS OBLIGED TO TAKE IN ORDER TO SET HIS MIND AT REST.

ON coming home I heard a great noise, and inquired the reason. They told me that Scipio was that night giving a supper to half-a-dozen of his friends, who were singing at the top of their voices, and indulging in loud peals of laughter. The meal was certainly not a banquet of the seven sages.

The founder of the feast, being informed of my arrival, said to his guests: "Gentlemen, there is nothing the matter: it is only the master who has returned, but that need not disturb you. Go on enjoying yourselves; I will but just whisper a word in his ear, and be back again in a moment." After speaking thus to them, he came to me. "What a hubbub these fellows are making!" I said to him. "What sort of company are you entertaining? Are they poets?" "Not at all, if it please you," he replied. "It would be a shame to give your wine to such fellows; I make a better use of it. There is among my guests a very wealthy young man who wishes to get a place through your influence, and in return for



his money. It is for his sake that the entertainment is given. For every glass of wine he drinks, I add ten pistoles to the present you are to receive; I want to make him go on drinking till daylight." "If that be the case," I replied, "go back to your guests, and do not spare the cellar."

I did not think this a proper time to talk to him about Catalina; but next morning, as I was dressing, I spoke to him as follows. "Friend Scipio, you know how we live together; I treat you more like an equal than a servant; you would, therefore, be wrong to deceive me as though I were a master. Let us thus have no secrets from each other; I am going to inform you of something which will surprise you, and you, on your side, must tell me what you really think of the women you have introduced me to. Between ourselves, I suspect them to be a couple of hussies, all the more artful for the simplicity they affect. If I am right in my conjecture, then the Prince of Spain has no great cause to be satisfied with me; for I will own to you that it was for him I spoke to you about a mistress. I took him to Catalina, and he has fallen in love with her." "Señor," replied Scipio, "you treat me too well for me to fail in sincerity towards you. Yesterday I had a private interview with the maid of these two ladies; and she has told me their story, which I thought amusing. I will

give you a brief account of it, which you will not be sorry to have heard.

“Catalina,” he continued, “is the daughter of a small country gentleman in Aragon. Left an orphan at fifteen, as poor as she was pretty, she lent a willing ear to the addresses of a commander<sup>1</sup> of a certain age, who took her to Toledo, where he died at the end of six months, having been more like a father than a husband to her. She secured his property, consisting of a few odd clothes, and three hundred pistoles in cash; and then went and joined Señora Mencia, who was still in vogue, though already on the wane. These two good friends lived together, and behaved in such a manner that they came under the notice of the authorities. This displeased the ladies, who, in high dudgeon, or for some other reason, suddenly left Toledo, and settled in Madrid, where they have been dwelling for these two years, without making any acquaintance in the neighbourhood. But the best part of the story is this; they have rented two small houses adjoining each other; and they can pass from one to the other by a connecting staircase in the cellar. Señora

<sup>1</sup> A commander was a member of a military religious order, who, by virtue of long or meritorious services, had the control of a manor, with lands and tenements appertaining thereto, part of the proceeds of which had to be used for the benefit of that order, and part for himself. Such a manor was called a commandery or preceptory.

Mencia lives with a young servant-maid in one of these houses, and the commander's widow occupies the other, with an old duenna whom she passes off for her grandmother; so that our Aragonese lady is at one time a niece, brought up by her aunt, and at another a ward under the protection of her grandmother. When she enacts the niece she is called Catalina; and when she personates the grand-daughter she calls herself Sirena."

At the name of Sirena I grew pale, and interrupted Scipio, saying — "What do I hear; you make me tremble. Alas! I am very much afraid that this cursed Aragonian girl is the mistress of Calderon!" "Why, of course she is," he answered; "it is the very woman. I thought you would be delighted with this news." "Don't imagine it," I replied. "It is more calculated to alarm me than rejoice me. Do you not see the consequences?" "No, on my word I do not," rejoined Scipio. "What evil can come of it? It is not certain that Don Rodrigo will discover what is going on; and if you fear that he will be told, you have only to warn the Prime Minister beforehand. Tell him the whole thing quite plainly, and he will see that you are not to blame; if, after that, Calderon should try to do you a bad turn with his Excellency, the Duke will clearly see that the former only wants to injure you, out of revenge."

By these words Scipio removed my fear, and I followed his advice. I informed the Duke of Lerma of this unlucky discovery ; and I even affected to give him all the details with a melancholy air, in order to persuade him that I was mortified at having unwittingly introduced Don Rodrigo's mistress to the Prince. But the minister, far from pitying his favourite, laughed at the adventure, and told me to go on as I had begun, saying that after all it was an honour for Calderon to love the same lady as the Prince of Spain, and to be no worse served by her than the latter was. I also told the truth to the Count of Lemos, who assured me of his protection if the first secretary should happen to discover the intrigue, and try to ruin me in the good opinion of the Duke.

Thinking that by these means I had secured the bark of my fortune against the dangers of quick-sands, I had no further fear. I anew accompanied the Prince whenever he visited Catalina, or rather the fair Sirena, who was artful enough to invent excuses for keeping away Don Rodrigo from her house, and for defrauding him of the nights which she was compelled to devote to his illustrious rival.

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## CHAPTER XIII.

GIL BLAS CONTINUES TO PLAY THE NOBLEMAN. HE  
HEARS NEWS OF HIS FAMILY. THE IMPRESSION  
THIS MAKES UPON HIM. HIS MISUNDERSTAND-  
ING WITH FABRICIO.

I HAVE already said that in the morning there was generally a crowd of people in my antechamber, who came to propose to me some negotiations; but I would never suffer them to mention business by word of mouth. Adopting the custom of the court, or rather in order to play the man of importance, I used to say to each applicant: "Give me a written memorandum." I was so used to this that one day I used the phrase to my landlord, who came to remind me that I owed him a year's rent. As for my butcher and baker, they spared me the trouble of asking for their memoranda, so punctual were they in bringing their bills every month. Scipio, who imitated me so well that it might be said the copy came very near the original, behaved in the same manner to those who came to entreat him to enlist me in their favour.

I was also guilty of another ridiculous piece of vanity, for which I do not pretend to find any excuse. I was silly enough to speak of the greatest noblemen as though I were one of



their equals. Thus, if I had to mention the Duke of Alba, the Duke of Ossuna, or the Duke of Medina Sidonia, I called them, without ceremony, Alba, Ossuna, or Medina Sidonia. In a word, I had become so proud and so vain that I imagined I was no longer the son of my own father and mother. Alas! poor duenna and poor squire, I did not inquire whether you were living happy or miserable in the Asturias; that did not enter my head at all; I never even gave you a thought. The Court has all the virtues of the river Lethe, in making us forget our relatives and friends when they are badly off.

Thus, I no longer remembered my family; when one morning a young man came to my house and said he wished to speak to me for a moment in private. He was shown into my study, where, without offering him a chair, as he seemed to be quite a common fellow, I asked him what he wanted. "Señor Gil Blas," he said, "why, do you not remember me?" I looked at him closely, but to no purpose; and I was obliged to tell him that his features were entirely unknown to me. "I am one of your townsmen," he replied, "born in Oviedo itself, and the son of Bertrand Muscada,<sup>1</sup> the grocer, who lived near your uncle, the Canon. I remember you very well. We have

<sup>1</sup> *Muscada* is the Spanish for "nutmeg."

played blindman's buff<sup>1</sup> together a thousand times."

"I have but a very vague notion of the amusements of my childhood," I replied; "the business in which I have since been engaged has driven them out of my memory." "I am come," he said, "to Madrid to settle with my father's correspondent. I have heard it said that you were on a good footing at court, and already as rich as a Jew. I congratulate you, and when I return home your family will be delighted on receiving such good news."

I could not decently avoid asking him how he had left my father, mother, and uncle; but this duty was performed so coldly, that my grocer had no cause to admire the warmth of my affection for my family. He gave me to understand as much, and seemed quite shocked at my indifference for those who ought to have been so dear to me; and as he was a candid and rough young fellow, he told me bluntly, "I thought you would have shown more affection and feeling for your connections. How coldly you ask after them! It looks as though you had dismissed them from your memory. Do you know how they are situated? I can tell you that your father and mother are still in service, and that the good Canon, Gil Perez, overcome by old age and infirmities, is

<sup>1</sup> In the original these words are in Spanish *gallina ciega*, literally "the blind fowl."

not far from his end. People ought to have some natural affection," he continued, "and as you are in a condition to assist your relatives, I advise you as a friend to allow them two hundred pistoles a year. By aiding them with this sum, you will secure them a comfortable and happy life, without any inconvenience to yourself."

Instead of being moved by the picture he drew of my family, I only resented the liberty he took in giving me his advice unasked. If he had had more tact, he might, perhaps, have persuaded me; but by his frankness he only offended me. He saw this plainly by my sulky silence; and as he continued his exhortation with less charity than ill-feeling, he put me out of patience. "Come, this is too much," I replied, in a passion; "get along, Mr Muscada, and only meddle in what concerns you. Go and see your father's correspondent, and do your business with him. A fine thing, for you to come and tell me what my duty is! I know better than you what I ought to do in such a matter." Whilst saying these words I pushed the grocer out of my room, and sent him back to Oviedo, to sell his pepper and his cloves.

Nevertheless, what he had told me made an impression on my mind. I reproached myself with being an unnatural son, and my heart softened. I recalled the care that had been bestowed on me in infancy and during my

education; I reflected how much I owed to my relatives; and my reflections were even accompanied by transports of gratitude, which nevertheless came to nothing. My ingratitude soon stifled them, and they were succeeded by profound oblivion. There are plenty of fathers who have children of the same kind.

Avarice and ambition, which possessed me, were entirely changing my disposition. I lost all my cheerfulness; I became abstracted and morose—in fact a wretched animal. Fabricio, seeing that I was quite taken up with the task of accumulating a fortune, and wholly estranged from him, came but rarely to see me. One day, indeed, he could not help saying to me, “In truth, Gil Blas, you are no longer the same man. Before you were about the Court your mind was always at ease, but now you seem perpetually disturbed. You form plan after plan to make a fortune, and the more wealth you accumulate, the more you wish to heap up. Besides, let me tell you, you no longer treat me with that cordiality, with those free and easy manners, which form the charms of friendship. On the contrary, you wear an air of mystery, and hide your real thoughts from me. I can even see your constraint in your very politeness to me. In short, Gil Blas is no longer the same Gil Blas whom I once knew.”

“You are no doubt bantering me,” I an-



swered, coldly enough, "I see no change in myself." "It is not your own eyes you can trust," he rejoined, "they are under a spell; but, believe me, the metamorphosis is but too real. Tell me fairly and honestly, my friend, are we living together as we used to do? When I went to knock at your door in the morning, you came and opened it yourself, generally half asleep, and I walked into your room without ceremony. What a difference now! You have lackeys. I am kept waiting in your antechamber, and my name has to be sent in before I can speak to you. Even after that, how do you receive me? With a chilling politeness and an air of importance; so that any one would suppose my visits began to weary you. Do you think such a reception can be agreeable to a man who has been your companion? No, Santillana, no; it does not suit me at all. Farewell; let us part amicably. Let us rid ourselves, you of your censor, and I of an upstart favourite of fortune who forgets himself."

I felt more annoyed than touched by his reproaches, and suffered him to take his departure without the slightest attempt to detain him. In the present temper of my mind, the friendship of a poet did not seem to be so valuable for me to be grieved by its loss. I found ample consolation for it in the intimacy of a few subaltern attendants about the King's



person, with whom a sympathy of disposition had of late closely connected me. These new acquaintances of mine were, for the most part, men who came I know not whence, and who had obtained their places by mere good luck. They all had already made their fortunes; and these wretches, setting down to their own merits alone, the favours with which the King's bounty had loaded them, forgot themselves just as I did. We thought ourselves very respectable personages. O Fortune! it is thus thou are wont to dispense thy favours. The Stoic Epictetus was not wrong in comparing thee to a well-born damsel, who abandons herself to the embraces of menials!

BOOK IX.



## CHAPTER I.

SCIPIO ADVISES GIL BLAS TO MARRY, AND PROPOSES  
TO HIM THE DAUGHTER OF A RICH AND CELE-  
BRATED GOLDSMITH. OF THE STEPS WHICH  
WERE TAKEN IN CONSEQUENCE.

ONE evening, after the company which had been supping with me had taken their leave, and I remained alone with Scipio, I asked him what he had been doing that day. "A master stroke," he replied; "I am preparing a wealthy match for you; I want you to marry the only daughter of a goldsmith of my acquaintance."

"A goldsmith's daughter!" I exclaimed, disdainfully; "have you lost your wits? Can you propose to me the daughter of a tradesman? When a man possesses a certain amount of merit, and is on a certain footing at court, it strikes me he should have somewhat more lofty views." "Pardon me, sir," replied Scipio, "don't talk in that way. Remember that it is the husband who raises the wife, and do not be more fastidious than a thousand noblemen whom I could name. You do not know that the heiress in question has a dowry of at least a hundred thousand ducats? Is not that a fine piece of plate?" As soon as I

heard him mention such a sum, I became more tractable. "I give in," I said to my secretary, "the dowry turns the scale. When do you mean to put me in possession?" "Gently, sir," he replied, "have a little patience. First of all, I must mention the matter to the father, and get his consent." "That's not bad!" I rejoined, with a burst of laughter, "are you no nearer than that? Then this marriage will soon come about?" "Sooner than you think," he replied; "I only need an hour's conversation with the goldsmith, and I answer for his consent. But before we go any further, pray let us settle preliminaries. Suppose I put you in the way of getting a hundred thousand ducats, how many will fall to my share?" "Twenty thousand," I replied. "Heaven be praised," said he, "I was limiting your gratitude to ten thousand; you are twice as generous as I am. Well, then, I will begin the negotiation to-morrow, and you may reckon on my success, or I am no better than a fool."

And, in fact, a couple of days later he said to me—"I have spoken to Señor Gabriel de Salero"<sup>1</sup> for such was our goldsmith's name. "I extolled your influence and your merits so highly that he has lent a favourable ear to my proposing you for a son-in-law. You are to have his daughter, with a hundred thousand ducats, provided you let him clearly see that

<sup>1</sup> *Salero* is the Spanish for a "salt-cellar."



you possess the favour of the minister.” “If that is all,” I said to Scipio, “I shall soon be married. But, by the way, have you seen the daughter? Is she handsome?” “Not so handsome as the dowry. Between ourselves, this rich heiress is not very pretty. Luckily you do not care much for that.” “Not I, my lad!” I replied; “we fellows about the court marry only for the sake of marrying; we look for beauty only in our friends’ wives; and if by chance it exists in our own, we pay so little attention to it, that these latter are quite right to punish us for our neglect.”

“This is not all,” replied Scipio; “Señor Gabriel invites you to sup with him to-night; we have agreed that no mention shall be made of the projected marriage. He is to invite several of his mercantile friends, and you will be merely one of the guests; to-morrow night he means to sup with you in the same way. So you see, he is a man who wishes to make his observations about you before going any further. It would be as well to be a little on your guard in his presence.” “The deuce!” I interrupted, with an air of confidence, “let him study me as much as he likes; I can only gain by such an examination.”

These arrangements were punctually carried out. I went to the goldsmith’s house, and he received me as familiarly as though we were already well acquainted. He was an

honest citizen, polite to a fault,<sup>1</sup> as the saying is. He introduced me to Señora Eugenia, his wife, and to the youthful Gabriela, his daughter. I paid them many compliments, without infringing the treaty, and uttered soft nonsense to them in exquisite diction, and in the usual phraseology of courtiers.

Gabriela, notwithstanding what my secretary had said to me, did not strike me as being at all disagreeable, which might arise from her being very richly dressed, or because I only saw her through her dowry. What a fine house was Señor Gabriel's! I fancy there is less silver in the mines of Peru than there was under his roof; under a thousand different forms the metal encountered your gaze everywhere. Every room, and especially the one in which we took our supper, was a perfect treasury. What a sight for the eyes of a son-in-law. The father-in-law, to make his entertainment more creditable, had brought together five or six mercantile men, all grave and wearisome personages. They spoke of nothing but their business; and it may be said that their conversation was rather a commercial conference than a convivial intercourse at supper-time.

Next evening it was my turn to entertain the goldsmith. Unable to dazzle him by my plate, I had recourse to another artifice. I

<sup>1</sup> The Spanish words *hasta porfiar*, until becoming fatiguing, are used by Lesage.

invited to supper those of my friends who made the best figure at court, and whom I knew to be ambitious persons who set no bounds to their desires. These fellows spoke of nothing but grandeur, and of the brilliant and lucrative positions to which they aspired; and this had its effect. Master Gabriel, awed by their grand ideas, felt himself, in spite of his wealth, quite an insignificant mortal by the side of these gentlemen. As for me, adopting a moderate tone, I declared that I should be satisfied with a middling fortune, something like twenty thousand ducats a year; whereupon these men, hungering for honours and riches, exclaimed that I was wrong, and that, favoured as I was by the Prime Minister, I ought not to limit myself at such a trifle. My intended father-in-law did not lose a single word of all they said, and when he was going away it seemed to me that he was thoroughly satisfied.

Scipio did not fail to visit him next morning, to ask him if he was pleased with me. "I am delighted with him," said the citizen; "that young man has won my heart. But, Señor Scipio," he added, "I entreat you, for old acquaintance's sake, to speak to me frankly. We all have our weaknesses, as you know. Tell me what is Señor de Santillana's? Is he a gambler, or a rake? What is his failing? Do not hide it from me, I beg you." "You wrong me, Señor Gabriel," replied the go-

between, "by putting such a question to me. I have your interest more at heart than my master's. If he had any bad habit likely to make your daughter unhappy, would I have ever proposed him as a son-in-law? No, zounds! I am too devoted to you. But, between ourselves, he has but one fault, that of having none. He is too steady for a young man." "So much the better," replied the goldsmith, "I am glad of that. Go, my friend, and assure him that he shall have my daughter, and that I would give her to him, even if he were not in the minister's favour."

As soon as my secretary had reported this conversation to me, I hastened to Salero's house, to thank him for his favourable opinion of me. He had already made known his pleasure to his wife and daughter, who gave me to understand, by their reception, that they had yielded without repugnance. I took my father-in-law and presented him to the Duke of Lerma, whom I had informed of this visit the evening before. His Excellency received him most graciously, and told him how pleased he was that he had selected for his son-in-law a man whom he greatly liked, and whose interests he intended to promote. Then he enlarged upon my good qualities, and said so much good of me that Gabriel thought he had found in my lordship,<sup>1</sup> the best match in Spain for his

<sup>1</sup> Lesage uses here *ma seigneurie*. See vol. i., INTRODUCTORY NOTICE, p. xxxvii., 6°.



daughter. He was so pleased at this that the tears came into his eyes. He clasped me tightly in his arms, when we were parting, and said, "My son, I am so impatient to see you Gabriela's husband, that you shall be married within eight days at latest."

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## CHAPTER II.

BY WHAT ACCIDENT GIL BLAS HAPPENED TO REMEMBER DON ALPHONSO DE LEYVA ; AND THE SERVICE WHICH HE RENDERED HIM, OUT OF VANITY.

LET us leave the subject of my marriage for a while. The course of my history requires me to mention the service I rendered to my former master, Don Alphonso. I had completely forgotten that gentleman's existence, but the following circumstance recalled him to mind.

The governorship of the town of Valencia fell vacant about this time ; and hearing this piece of news I thought of Don Alphonso de Leyva. I considered that this post would exactly suit him ; and, less perhaps from friendship than from ostentation, I resolved to apply for it for him. I represented to myself that, if I should obtain it, it would do me infinite credit, and therefore addressed myself to the



Duke of Lerma. I told him that I had been steward to Don Cæsar de Leyva and his son, and that, having every possible reason to be grateful to them, I ventured to beg that he would give one or other of them the governorship of Valencia. The Minister replied: "Most willingly, Gil Blas; I like to see you grateful and generous. Besides, you speak on behalf of a family whom I esteem; the de Leyvas are faithful servants of the King; they richly deserve this place. You can do what you like with it; I give it you as a wedding-present."

Delighted at the success of my application, I went without loss of time to Calderon to get the letters patent made out for Don Alphonso. There were a great number of persons waiting in respectful silence until Don Rodrigo should give them an audience. I made my way through the crowd, and presented myself at the door of his private room, which was opened to me. There I found ever so many knights, commanders, and other persons of importance, to whom Calderon was listening, one after another. His difference of manner in receiving them was remarkable. On some he was content to bestow a slight nod; others he honoured with a bow, and led them to the door of the room. He put, as it were, shades of discrimination in the civilities which he dispensed. On the other hand, I saw certain

gentlemen who, annoyed by the slight attention paid to them, cursed in their very souls the necessity which compelled them to cringe before such a fellow. Others again I saw who were laughing in their sleeves at his foppish and self-sufficient airs. It was of no use to me to make these observations, for I was incapable of profiting by them. I did the same thing at my own house, and I hardly cared whether my haughty manners were praised or blamed, so long as they were respected.

Don Rodrigo, happening to turn his eyes in my direction, suddenly left a gentleman who was speaking to him, and came to embrace me, with demonstrations of affection which surprised me. "Ah, my dear colleague," he exclaimed, "what business procures me the pleasure of seeing you here? What can I do for you?" I told him the cause of my visit; and thereupon he assured me, in the most obliging terms, that the patent I asked for should be ready within twenty-four hours. Nor did his politeness end here; he accompanied me to the door of his antechamber, whither he never attended any but noblemen of the highest rank, and there he embraced me again.

"What is the meaning of all these attentions?" I mused as I went away; "what do they foreshadow? Is Calderon plotting my ruin? Or does he want to win my friendship? Or, feeling that his favour is declining, does

he cultivate me with a view to asking my intercession for him with our patron?" I did not know which of these conjectures to adopt. On the next day, when I went to him again, he treated me in the same style, overwhelming me with caresses and civilities. He certainly made up for them by the reception he gave to other persons who came to speak to him. He snarled at some, was cold to others, and displeased almost everyone. But they were all amply avenged by an adventure which occurred, and which I must not pass over in silence. I recommend it to the particular attention of all government clerks and secretaries who may read it.

A man, very plainly dressed, and who did not at all appear what he really was, accosted Calderon, and spoke to him about a certain memorial which he said he had presented to the Duke of Lerma. Don Rodrigo did not even look at the gentleman, and gruffly asked, "What is your name, friend?" "They called me Francillo when I was a child," coolly replied the gentleman; "I have since been called Don Francisco de Zuniga;<sup>1</sup> and my present name is the Count de Pedrosa."<sup>2</sup> Calderon, confounded at these words, and seeing that he

<sup>1</sup> The diminutive of *Francesco* would be in Spanish *Francisquillo*. Zuniga is one of the most ancient families of Castile.

<sup>2</sup> The Countess de Pedrosa has already been mentioned. See vol. i. bk. iii. chap. 3, p. 253, and also vol. ii. bk. iv. chap. 6, p. 83, note 1.

had to do with a man of the highest rank, wished to apologise. "My lord," he said to the Count, "I ask your pardon if, through not knowing you. . . ." "I want none of your apologies," haughtily interrupted Francillo; "I despise them as much as your impoliteness. Recollect henceforth that a minister's secretary ought to receive all classes of persons politely. Be vain enough, if you like, to consider yourself your master's substitute; but do not forget that you are simply his servant."

The proud Don Rodrigo was much mortified by this incident. But he became none the more reasonable on that account. For my own part, I took particular notice of that rebuff.<sup>1</sup> I resolved to be careful to whom I spoke at my receptions, and to be insolent only to those who were dumb. As Don Alphonso's letters of appointment were ready, I carried them away, and sent them by a special messenger to the young nobleman, with a letter from the Duke of Lerma, wherein his Excellency informed him that the King had just appointed him Governor of Valencia; but I did not let him know the part I had taken in this nomination; I did not even write to him, anticipating the

<sup>1</sup> In the original *je marquai cette chasse-là*, I scored that chase, a technical expression used in the game of tennis, for marking the place where the ball has fallen, and beyond which the adversary must strike his ball, in order to gain a point.



pleasure of telling it him by word of mouth, and of causing him an agreeable surprise when he should come to court to be sworn in.

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### CHAPTER III.

THE PREPARATIONS MADE FOR THE MARRIAGE OF  
GIL BLAS, AND THE IMPORTANT EVENT WHICH  
RENDERED THEM USELESS.

LET us return to my lovely Gabriela, whom I was to marry in eight days. Preparations for the ceremony were made on both sides. Salero ordered sumptuous dresses for the bride, and I engaged for her a lady's-maid, a footman, and an old gentleman-usher, all selected by Scipio, who awaited with still more impatience than myself the day when the dowry was to be paid down.

On the evening before the longed-for day, I was taking supper with my father-in-law, amongst uncles and aunts, and cousins of both sexes. I played to perfection the part of the hypocritical son-in-law. I overwhelmed the goldsmith and his wife with numberless complaisant attentions; I pretended to be passionately in love with Gabriela; I courted the whole family, to whose vapid talk and commonplace arguments I listened without impatience.



And so, as a reward for my endurance, I had the happiness of pleasing all the relatives. There was not one who did not seem satisfied by the alliance.

When the repast was finished, the company passed into a large room, where they were treated to a concert of vocal and instrumental music, not badly executed, though the best performers in Madrid had not been selected. Some lively airs, by which our ears were pleasantly entertained, put us into such good humour that we began to arrange ourselves into sets for dancing. Heaven knows how we got on at it, since they took me for a pupil of Terpsichore, though I had had no other instruction in this art except two or three lessons from a little dancing-master who came to teach the pages at the Marchioness of Chave's! After we had thoroughly amused ourselves, it was time to think of going home. There was no end of my bows and salutations. "Farewell, son-in-law," said Salero, embracing me; "I shall be at your house to-morrow morning to bring the dowry in good golden coin." "You will be welcome," I replied, "my dear father-in-law." Then, wishing the family good-night, I entered my carriage, which was waiting at the gate, and ordered it to drive home.

I was scarcely two hundred yards from Señor Gabriel's house when fifteen or twenty men, some on foot, others on horseback, all armed

with swords and carbines, surrounded my carriage and stopped it, crying "In the King's name!" They quickly made me get out, and hustled me into a post-chaise; and the leader of these gentlemen, having got in with me, told the coachman to proceed to Segovia. I soon perceived that it was a worthy alguazil whom I had by my side. I wanted to ask him why I had been arrested, but he replied in the usual tone of these gentry, that is, very roughly, that he had no account to render to me. I suggested that he might have possibly made a mistake. "No, no," he replied, "I know what I am about. You are Señor de Santillana; it is you whom I am ordered to conduct whither I am taking you." Having nothing to say in answer to these words, I resolved to hold my tongue. For the remainder of the night we drove along the banks of the Manzanares, in profound silence, changed horses at Colmenar, and arrived next evening at Segovia, where I was locked up in the tower.

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## CHAPTER IV.

HOW GIL BLAS WAS TREATED IN THE TOWER OF  
SEGOVIA, AND HOW HE LEARNED THE CAUSE  
OF HIS IMPRISONMENT.

I WAS first put into a dungeon, and left to lie on straw, like a criminal worthy of death. I spent the night, not in despair, for I did not yet feel the whole of my misfortune, but in endeavouring to find out what could have brought about this catastrophe. I did not doubt that it was the work of Calderon. Yet even supposing that he had discovered all, I could not conceive how he could have induced the Duke of Lerma to treat me so cruelly. At one time I fancied that it was without His Excellency's knowledge that I had been arrested; and at another I thought it was himself who, for some political reason, had had me imprisoned, as ministers sometimes do with their favourites.

I was much disturbed by these various conjectures when the light of day, peeping in through a small grated window, showed me all the horror of the place in which I was confined. I then gave vent to my grief, and my eyes became two founts of tears which the remembrance of my former prosperity rendered in-

exhaustible. As I was abandoning myself to despair, a turnkey came into my cell, who brought me a loaf of bread and a pitcher of water for my day's allowance. He looked at me, and observing that my face was bathed in tears, felt a sensation of pity, gaoler though he was. "Prisoner," said he, "do not despair. You must not feel the vicissitudes of life so strongly. You are young,<sup>1</sup> and will see better days, after this is over. Meanwhile eat the king's bread with a good grace."

My comforter went away as he ended these words, to which I replied only with lamentations and groans. The rest of the day was spent in cursing my luck, without thinking of doing justice to my provisions, which, in my present state, seemed less a favour from the royal bounty than a result of the royal anger, since they served rather to prolong than to assuage the sufferings of the wretched.

At last night came, and presently a rattle of keys attracted my attention. The door of my dungeon opened, and a moment later a man came in with a candle in his hand. He advanced towards me and said: "Señor Gil Blas, behold in me one of your old friends. I am that Don Andrea de Tordesillas who lived with you at Grenada, and who was one of the archbishop's attendants when you were that

<sup>1</sup> Gil Blas was then fifty years old. See INTRODUCTORY NOTICE, vol. i., page xxvii.

prelate's favorite.<sup>1</sup> You begged him, if you remember, to use his influence for me, and he got me an appointment in Mexico; but instead of embarking for the Indies I stopped in the town of Alicante. There I married the daughter of the governor of the castle, and by a chain of circumstances of which I will give you the particulars by and by, I became keeper of the tower of Segovia. You are fortunate," he said, "to meet in a man recommended to treat you severely, a friend who will spare no pains to soften the rigours of your imprisonment. I am expressly ordered not to let you speak to anyone, to let you lie on straw, and to give you no other sustenance than bread and water. Not only am I too humane not to pity your misfortunes; but you have done me a service, and my gratitude gets the better of the orders I have received. Far from acting as cruelly as they wish, I mean to treat you as well as I can. Get up, and follow me."

Though the worthy keeper certainly deserved thanks, my mind was so disturbed that I could not say a single word to him. All I could do was to follow him. He led me across a court and up a very narrow staircase to a small room at the top of the tower. I was not a little surprised on entering this room, to see on the table two candles lighted, in brass candlesticks, and covers neatly laid for two. "They

<sup>1</sup> See vol. ii., bk. vii., chap. 3, page 314.



will bring you something to eat in a moment," said Tordesillas. "We will sup here together. I have fixed on this place for your residence, where you will be better off than in your dungeon. You will see from your window the flowery banks of the Erema, and the delightful valley which, from the foot of the mountains separating the two Castiles, extends as far as Coca. Of course at first you will care little for such a lovely prospect; but when time shall have changed your violent grief into a gentle state of melancholy, it will be a pleasure to let your eyes wander on such agreeable objects. Besides, you may be sure that linen and other articles necessary to a man who likes to be cleanly, shall be always at your service. Moreover, you shall have a good bed, and plenty of food; and I will supply you with as many books as you like; in short, you shall have all the comfort that a prisoner can have."

After such obliging offers I felt somewhat consoled. I took courage, and returned my gaoler many thanks, assuring him that his generous action recalled me to life, and that I hoped I should find myself once more in a position to give him evidence of my gratitude. "Well, and why should you not?" he replied. "Do you imagine you have lost your liberty for ever? If you do, you are mistaken, and I will venture to assure you that you will get off with a few months' imprisonment."

“What is that you say, Don Andrea?” I exclaimed. “You speak as though you knew the cause of my misfortune.” “I will confess,” he replied, “that I am not ignorant of it. The alguazil who brought you hither told me the secret, which I will reveal to you. He informed me that the King, learning that you and the Count of Lemos had taken the Prince of Spain by night to a lady of suspicious character, and in order to punish you both, has exiled the Count, and sent you to the tower of Segovia, there to be treated with all the rigour which you have experienced since you came here.” “And how,” I asked, “did this circumstance come to the King’s knowledge? That is what I particularly want to know.” “And that,” he replied, “is what the alguazil did not tell me, and what he was apparently ignorant of himself.”

Here our conversation was interrupted by the entrance of several attendants, bringing supper. On the table they placed bread, two cups, two bottles, and three large dishes. In one of these there was a jugged hare with plenty of onions, oil, and saffron; in the other an *olla podrida*, and in the third a young turkey on a layer of *berengena*.<sup>1</sup> When Tordesillas saw that we had all we needed, he dismissed the attendants, not wishing our conversation to be overheard. He closed the door, and we sat

<sup>1</sup> A *Berengena* is an egg-plant.

down opposite each other. "Let us begin," he said, "with what is most urgent. Your appetite ought to be good after two days of fasting." Whilst saying these words he piled my plate with viands. He thought he was helping a famished man, and indeed nothing was more likely than that I should stuff myself with his stews; but I disappointed him. However much I was in need of food, I could not swallow a morsel, so deeply did I take my present situation to heart. To chase from my mind the painful ideas which ceaselessly came to afflict me, the keeper tried in vain to make me drink, and expatiated on the excellence of his wine; but if he had given me nectar I should have drunk it without pleasure. He perceived this; and adopting a different plan, began in a cheerful style to tell me the story of his marriage. He succeeded no better by this. I listened to his narrative with such an absent mind that, when he had finished, I could not have told what he had just been relating to me. He concluded that he was attempting too much by trying to divert my gloomy thoughts for that evening. He rose from table when he had finished supper, and said, "Señor de Santillana, I shall leave you to your repose, or rather to muse on your misfortune, at leisure. But, take my word for it, it will not last long. The King is naturally kind-hearted. When his anger shall have subsided,

and when he shall think of the pitiable condition in which he believes you are plunged, he will consider you sufficiently punished." With these words my worthy keeper went downstairs, and sent the attendants to clear the table. They carried off even the two candlesticks, and I went to bed by the dim light of a lamp fixed to the wall.

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## CHAPTER V.

THE REFLECTIONS OF GIL BLAS BEFORE HE WENT  
TO SLEEP THAT NIGHT ; AND THE NOISE WHICH  
AWOKE HIM.

I SPENT at least two hours reflecting on what Tordesillas had told me. "So then," I said, "I am here for having ministered to the pleasures of the heir apparent. How imprudent have I been to render such services to so young a prince ! for it is his tender youth alone which constitutes my crime.<sup>1</sup> Had he been older the King perhaps might only have laughed at that which now has so strongly irritated him. But who can have given such information to the monarch without dreading the resentment of the Prince, or of the Duke

<sup>1</sup> See bk. viii., chap. v., page 33, note 1.



of Lerma? That minister will undoubtedly avenge his nephew, the Count of Lemos. How can the King have made the discovery? That is what I cannot conceive."

My thoughts continually returned to this subject. But the idea that afflicted me most, and even drove me to despair, and which my mind could not get rid of, was the pillage to which I felt sure my property had been abandoned. "My strong-box," I exclaimed, "where are you? My beloved riches, what has become of you? Into whose hands have you fallen! Alas, I have lost you even in less time than you were won!" I pictured the disorder which must have prevailed in my house, and my reflections increased in sadness. The confusion of so many different thoughts threw me into a stupor which was so far favourable, that sleep, which had avoided me the night before, now scattered her poppies over me. The comfortable bed, the fatigue which I had undergone, as well as the fumes of the viands and wine, contributed to my drowsiness. I slept profoundly; and to all appearance daylight would have surprised me in this condition, if I had not suddenly been awakened by some sounds somewhat unusual in prison. I heard the thrumming of a guitar, accompanied by a man's voice. I listened attentively, but heard nothing more, and fancied it had been a dream. But a moment afterwards my ear was caught



by strains of the same instrument, and by the same voice, singing as follows :—

Ah me ! a whole year's happiness,  
Like a light Zephyr glideth by ;  
But one sharp moment of distress,  
Torments us for a century.<sup>1</sup>

This stanza, which sounded as if it had been made expressly for me, irritated my grief. “I am only too sensible,” I said, “of the truth of those words. It seems to me that the period of my good fortune has passed very quickly, and that I have already been an age in prison.” I again fell into a painful reverie, and began to deplore my fate anew, as though it were a pleasure to me. My lamentations ended with the night; and the first rays of the sun which lighted my chamber, somewhat calmed my anxieties. I rose to open my window, and to air my room; and then I glanced over the country, which I remembered the keeper had described to me as so lovely, but I found nothing to justify what he had said. The Erema, which I had conceived to be at least as large as the Tagus, seemed a mere brook; only nettles and thistles clothed its “flowery banks;” and the so-called “delightful valley” presented to my sight

<sup>1</sup> Lesage gives these verses in Spanish; they are probably borrowed from some Spanish author :—

Ay di me ! un anno felice  
Parece un soplo ligero ;  
Pero sin dicha un instante  
Es un siglo de tormento.

nothing but stretches of land, for the most part uncultivated. Apparently I was not yet in that "gentle state of melancholy" which would enable me to see things otherwise than I saw them now.

I began to dress, and had already half-finished when Tordesillas arrived, ushering in an old female servant, bringing some shirts and towels. "Señor Gil Blas," he said, "here is your linen. Do not stint yourself, I will take care that you shall always have plenty. Well, how have you passed the night? Did sleep suspend your troubles for a few moments?" "I might perhaps have been asleep still," I replied, "if I had not been awakened by a voice accompanied by a guitar." "The gentleman who disturbed your rest," he rejoined, "is a State prisoner, whose room is next to your own. He is a knight of the military order of Calatrava, and a very pleasant-looking man. His name is Don Gaston de Cogollos. You may meet, and take your meals together. It will afford mutual consolation to both of you to converse together, and you will get on very well with one another." I told Don Andrea how grateful I was for his kindness in permitting me to mingle my sorrows with those of this gentleman; and as I betrayed some impatience to become acquainted with my companion in misfortune, our obliging keeper gave me that satisfaction the same day. He allowed me to

dine with Don Gaston, whose prepossessing mien, and handsome appearance surprised me. You may fancy what sort of a man he must have been to produce so strong an impression on eyes accustomed to see the most brilliant, youthful courtiers. Picture a man wonderfully handsome, one of those heroes of romance who have only to show themselves in order to cause sleepless nights to princesses. Add to this that Nature, who generally bestows her gifts with some alloy, had endowed Cogollos with a good deal of intelligence and merit. He was a perfect gentleman.

If he charmed me, I on my side was fortunate enough not to displease him. He sang no more during the night, for fear of disturbing me, much as I entreated him not to restrain his inclinations on my account. An intimacy is soon contracted between brethren in misfortune. A close friendship succeeded to mere acquaintance, and grew stronger day by day. The liberty of speaking together when we chose was very serviceable to us, since by our conversations we helped each other to endure our ills in patience.

One day after dinner I went into his room, as he was about to play on his guitar. To listen to him more at my ease I sat down on a stool, which was his only seat; whilst he, sitting on the foot of his bed, played a most touching air, and sang to it some words ex-

pressing the despair to which the cruelty of a lady had reduced her lover. When he had finished I said to him, with a smile, "Sir Knight, such verses as these you were never compelled to employ in your amours. You are not made to find women cruel." "You have too good an opinion of me," he replied, "I composed the verses you have heard on my own account, to soften a heart which I thought as hard as adamant; to touch a lady who treated me with extreme severity. You must hear my story; and you will at the same time learn the reason of my misfortunes."

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## CHAPTER VI.

THE STORY OF DON GASTON DE COGOLLOS AND  
DONNA HELENA DE GALISTEO.

It is now almost four years since I left Madrid for Coria, to visit my aunt, Donna Eleonora de Laxarilla, one of the richest dowagers in Old Castile, who has no heir except myself. I had scarcely arrived within her doors before love disturbed my peace. The windows of my room faced the Venetian blinds of the house of a lady living opposite, and whom I could easily see, so wide apart were the laths, and so narrow was the street. I did not neglect such an

opportunity, and I thought my neighbour so lovely that I was captivated at once. I signified my passion to her, before long, by such ardent looks, that she could not misunderstand me. She saw what was going on; but she was not a girl to pride herself on such a discovery, and still less to reply to my overtures.

I wanted to know the name of this dangerous creature who so speedily troubled people's hearts. I learned that it was Donna Helena, only daughter of Don George de Galisteo, the owner of a domain yielding a large revenue, a few leagues from Coria. She had had frequent offers of marriage, but her father had rejected them all, because he desired to bestow her hand on his nephew, Don Augustin de Olighera, who, until the marriage took place, was daily at liberty to see and converse with his cousin. This did not damp my courage; on the contrary, I fell more and more in love with her; and the proud pleasure of supplanting a favoured rival perhaps excited me still more than my affection, to press my suit. I therefore continued to cast passionate looks on Helena; I also directed suppliant glances on her maid Felicia, as though to implore her assistance; and I even talked with my fingers.<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> The Countess d'Aulnoy, in the thirteenth letter of her *Relation*, dated August 30th, 1679, says of this talking on the fingers, which she witnessed during the entrance in Madrid of the Marquis de Villars, the French ambassador: "As these (Spanish) lovers almost never have an opportunity of speaking to the ladies they



But all these efforts of gallantry were useless ; I made no more impression on the maid than on the mistress ; they both seemed cruel and inaccessible.

As they refused to answer the language of my eyes, I had recourse to other interpreters. I set certain persons to work to discover what acquaintances Felicia might have in the town. They found out that an old woman named Theodora was her most intimate friend, and that they often visited each other. Delighted with this discovery I went myself to Theodora, whom I enlisted in my service by means of presents. She took up my cause, promised to contrive and let me have a private conversation

love, they do not fail to place themselves in their carriages near the balconies where these ladies are, and then they converse with the eyes and the fingers. This custom is of great assistance in order to be more quickly understood than by the voice. Such a dumb language appears to me rather difficult, unless one is very accustomed to it. But they (the Spaniards) are so ; and only two days ago I saw a little girl of six and a little boy of almost the same age, who knew already how to communicate a thousand pretty things to each other. Don Frederick de Cardone, who saw them as well as myself, and who understood them much better, explained everything to me ; and, if he has added nothing of his own to the conversation of these two children, it must be acknowledged that here gallantry is innate." And the Marquis de Louville, who accompanied the Duke of Anjou to Spain in 1701, and who again visited that country fifteen years later, relates in his *Mémoires Secrets*, that the "Duke of Alba, the saddest and most serious man I have ever seen, had fallen in love with a sister of the Duke of Ossuna, a lady of the palace and as ugly as himself. As he cannot see at all, it is his valet who makes signs for him from a distance."

with her friend at her own house, and kept her word the very next day.

“I cease to be unhappy,” I said to Felicia, “since my sorrows have excited your pity. What do I not owe to your friend for having induced you to give me the satisfaction of conversing with you.” “Señor,” she replied, “Theodora has great influence with me. She has brought me over to your interests, and if it were in my power to make you happy, you should soon attain the height of your desires; but with all my good will I do not think I shall be much help to you. You must not deceive yourself: you have never undertaken a more difficult enterprise. You love a lady who is prepossessed in favour of another gentleman. And what a lady! A lady so proud and so well able to hide her feelings that if, by your constancy and assiduities you should succeed in extorting from her some sighs, you have no need to imagine that her pride would allow you the pleasure of hearing them.” “Ah, my dear Felicia,” I exclaimed in an agony of grief, “why do you tell me all the obstacles I shall have to surmount? These details overcome me; deceive me rather than drive me to despair.” With these words, I took one of her hands, pressed it between mine, and put on her finger a diamond ring, worth three hundred pistoles, speaking to her in such a touching manner as to make her weep.

She was too much moved by my words and too much pleased with my actions to leave me without consolation. She smoothed down the difficulties a little. "Señor," said she, "what I have just been telling you need not deprive you of all hope. It is true your rival is not hated; he comes freely to see his cousin at her house, and speaks to her whenever he pleases; but this circumstance is in your favour. Their habit of being together every day makes their intercourse rather languid; they seem to me to part without sorrow and to meet again without pleasure. People would think they were already married. In a word, I do not think that my mistress entertains a violent passion for Don Augustin. Besides, there is such a difference between yourself and him, as far as personal qualities go, that it cannot fail to be observed by so refined a young lady as Donna Helena is. Do not despair then. Continue your attentions, and I will lose no opportunity of pointing out to my mistress everything you may do to please her. She may disguise her feelings as she will, but I shall discover them in spite of her reserve."

After this conversation, Felicia and I separated, well pleased with each other. I prepared myself anew to observe the daughter of Don George; and gave her a serenade, in which the verses which you heard just now were sung by a fine voice. After the concert

the maid, in order to sound her mistress, asked her if she had been amused. "The voice, pleased me," said Donna Helena. "And were not the words very touching?" asked the maid. "As for them," replied the lady, "I paid no attention to them; I did not heed the verses at all, and hardly care to know who has given me this serenade." "If that be the case," exclaimed the maid, "poor Don Gaston de Cogollos is much deceived in his expectations, and very silly to spend his time in gazing at our blinds." "Probably it may not be he," said the mistress coldly; "but some other gentleman who declares his passion by this concert; you may be mistaken." "Excuse me," replied Felicia, "it is Don Gaston himself; for he accosted me this morning in the street; he even begged me to assure you that he adores you, in spite of the rigour with which you repay his love; and, in short, that he would esteem himself the happiest of all men if you would permit him to show his tenderness by his assiduities, and by entertainments. These words," she continued, "are sufficient proof that I am not mistaken."

Don George's daughter suddenly changed countenance, and casting a severe look at her maid, said: "You might have abstained from repeating this impertinent conversation to me. Please take care, and let me never hear such talk again. If that rash young man still



dares to address you, I command you to tell him to turn his attention to a lady who will care more for his gallantries; and to choose a more gentlemanly occupation than that of remaining all day at his window, watching what I am doing in my apartment."

All this was faithfully related to me in a second interview by Felicia, who assured me that I ought not to take her mistress's words literally, and wanted to persuade me that everything was going on very favourably. As for me, who had not much tact, and who did not believe that these words could be explained in my favour, I mistrusted her commentaries. She laughed at my misgiving, asked her friend for pen, ink, and paper, and said to me: "Señor, write immediately to Donna Helena in the character of a despairing lover. Give a passionate description of your sufferings, and, above all, complain of her forbidding you to appear at your windows. Promise to obey her; but assure her that it will cost you your life. Put this down in the way you fine gentlemen know so well how to do, and leave the rest to me. I hope the result will do more honour to my penetration than you imagine."

I should have been the first lover who, having a good opportunity of writing to his mistress, failed to profit by it. My letter was couched in the most pathetic terms. Before



closing it, I showed it to Felicia, who smiled as she read it, and said "that if women knew the art of infatuating men, men, by way of compensation, were not ignorant of the art of cajoling women." The maid took my letter, and assured me that it would not be her fault if it did not produce a good effect; then, recommending me to take care to keep my windows closed for a few days, she went back to Don George's house.

"My lady," said she to Donna Helena when she got home, "I met Don Gaston. He must needs come up to me, and wanted to talk me over with flattering speeches. With a faltering voice, and like a criminal expecting his sentence, he asked me if I had given you his message. So, obeying your commands without loss of time, I interrupted him abruptly, and rated him soundly. I loaded him with reproaches, and left him in the street quite overcome by my vehemence." "I am delighted," replied Donna Helena, "that you have rid me of this troublesome man; but you need not have spoken so rudely to him; a girl should always be gentle in her behaviour." "My lady, a woman cannot get rid of a passionate lover by mincing her words," replied the maid; "she does not always succeed even when flying in a passion. Don Gaston, for instance, was not discouraged. After having heaped reproaches upon him, as I said just now, I went to your

relative's house, as you bade me. Unfortunately the lady detained me too long; I say too long, because on coming back, I met again the gentleman whom I had not expected to behold any more; I was upset to see him—so upset, indeed, that my tongue, which never fails me at a pinch, would not supply me with a single word. What do you think he did in the meantime? He took advantage of my silence, or rather of my condition, to slip a piece of paper into my hand, which I kept without knowing what I was doing;—then he disappeared in a moment."

Whilst telling her story she drew my letter from her bosom and gave it, as though it were a joke, to her mistress, who having taken it as if to make fun of it, read it all through, and then affected reserve. "Really, Felicia," she said to her maid with a serious air, "you are a thoughtless, silly creature to have taken charge of this letter. What will Don Gaston think of it? And what ought I to think of it? By such conduct you give me cause to doubt your fidelity, whilst he must suspect me of responding to his passion. Alas! perhaps he is at this moment thinking that I am delighted to read over and over again what he has written! Consider how you shame my pride." "Oh no, my lady," replied the maid, "he could not think so; and even if he did he shall not do so long. I will tell him

the first time I see him, that I showed you his letter, that you glanced at the address with an icy look, and that then, without reading it, you tore it to pieces with the most mortifying contempt." "You can safely swear that I did not read it," rejoined Donna Helena; "I should be much puzzled to repeat two words of it." Don George's daughter, not content with saying these words, tore up my note, and forbade her maid ever to speak of me again.

As I had promised to play no more the gallant at my windows, since my appearance displeased Donna Helena, I kept them shut for several days, to make my obedience more conspicuous. But, as I was forbidden to make any gestures I prepared anew serenades for the hard-hearted lady. One night I went beneath her balcony along with several musicians, and the guitars were already making themselves heard, when a gentleman, sword in hand, came up and disturbed the concert, striking right and left at the musicians, who instantly took to their heels. The fury which animated this rash intruder excited mine; I advanced to punish him, and we began to fight fiercely. Donna Helena and her maid, who were disturbed by the clash of our swords, looked through the blinds, and seeing two men fighting, cried out so loud, that they roused Don George and his servants, who soon got up, and hastened, together with some of the neighbours, to separate the combatants.

But they came too late ; they found only one gentleman on the field of battle, weltering in his blood and almost lifeless. They recognised me as this unfortunate man, and carried me to my aunt's, whither the cleverest surgeons in the town were summoned.

Everyone pitied me, and especially Donna Helena, who now displayed her real feelings. Her reserve yielded to sentiment. Would you believe that she was no longer the maiden who made it a point of honour to seem insensible to my gallantries, but a tender-hearted girl in love, unreservedly abandoning herself to her grief? She spent the rest of the night in weeping with her maid, and cursing her cousin, Don Augustin de Olighera, whom they thought must be the cause of their tears. In fact, it was he who had so unpleasantly disturbed the serenade. As reserved as his cousin, he had perceived my attentions, without making a sign ; and fancying that she responded to them, he had committed this act of violence to show that he was less patient than he was believed to be. But this sad accident was presently succeeded by a rapture which caused it to be forgotten. Dangerously wounded as I was, the skill of the surgeons cured me, and while I was still confined to my room, my aunt, Donna Eleonora, went to Don George's, and asked for me the hand of Donna Helena. He consented the more willingly



to this marriage, because he regarded Don Augustin as a man whom he might never see again. The good old gentleman feared that his daughter might be reluctant to give me her hand as her 'cousin Olighera had been allowed to visit her whenever he pleased, and try to gain her affection at his leisure. But she seemed to be so much disposed to obey her father's behest, that it may hence be concluded that, in Spain as elsewhere, it is an advantage among the ladies to be a new-comer.

As soon as I was able to have a private conversation with Felicia, I learned how much her mistress had felt the unfortunate result of my encounter; and, as I could no longer doubt that I was my Helen's Paris, I blessed my wound, which had proved so propitious for my love. Don George allowed me to speak to his daughter in her maid's presence. What a delightful conversation! I so begged and pressed the lady to tell me whether her father was doing any violence to her feelings, by trusting her to my affection, that she confessed it was not only to her obedience that I owed her consent. After so charming an avowal, my sole care was to please her, and to contrive delightful entertainments until the day of our wedding, which was to be celebrated by a splendid cavalcade in which all the nobility of Coria and the neighbourhood intended to figure.



I was giving a grand entertainment in a splendid country house of my aunt's, not far from the town on the road to Manroi. Don George, his daughter, with all their relatives and friends, were present. I had given orders for a concert of vocal and instrumental music; and had sent for a company of strolling players to act a comedy. In the middle of the festivities some one told me that there was a man in the hall requesting to see me on a very important matter. I rose from table to go and see who it was; and found waiting for me a stranger, looking like a gentleman's servant, who handed me a letter. I opened it and found these words:—

“If honour be dear to you, as it ought to be to every knight of your order, you will not fail to attend to-morrow morning in the plain of Manroi. There you will find a gentleman who desires to give you satisfaction for the injury which you received from him, and to prevent you, if he can, from marrying Donna Helena.—Don Augustin de Olighera.”

If love has much sway over Spaniards, vengeance is still more powerful. I did not read this note with much composure. At the mere name of Don Augustin there was kindled in my veins a fire which almost made me forget the indispensable duties I had to perform that day. I was tempted to steal away from the company, and find out my enemy at once. But I put a

restraint upon myself, for fear of disturbing the festivities, and said to the messenger who had brought me the letter—"My friend, you may tell the gentleman who sends you that I am too anxious to have another encounter with him, not to be at the appointed spot to-morrow, before sun-rise."

After dispatching the messenger with this reply I rejoined my guests, and resumed my place at table, where I composed my countenance so well that no one could have suspected what was passing within me. For the rest of the day I seemed to be taken up like the others, by the pleasures of the entertainment, which ended at last about midnight.<sup>1</sup> Then the company separated, and each guest returned to town as he had come. As for me, I remained at the country house, and pretended I wanted to enjoy the fresh air next morning; but this was only, that I might not be too late at the appointed spot. Instead of going to bed I waited impatiently for day-break, and as soon as it appeared, I took my best horse, and set off alone, as though for a ride in the country. I rode towards Manroi, and on the

<sup>1</sup> In the original *au milieu de la nuit*, which does not mean here "in the middle of the night," but stands for *à minuit*, at midnight. If the company had separated in the middle of the night Don Gaston should have said that he wished to enjoy the air "this" morning, and not "next" morning. Moreover, the middle of the night in Spain is light in summer time, and Don Gaston should not then have had to "wait impatiently for day-break"?

plain I discovered a man on horseback, coming towards me at full speed. I pushed forward so as to spare him half the journey; and we soon met. It was my rival. "Knight," said he insolently, "I regret to come into collision with you a second time; but it is your own fault. After the adventure of the serenade, it would have become you to have waived your pretensions to the hand of Don George's daughter, or else you might have taken it for granted that you would again meet with opposition, if you persisted in trying to please her." "You are too vain," I replied, "of an advantage which you probably owed less to your skill than to the darkness of night. You forget that fortune in arms is fickle." "Not for me," he said, arrogantly; "and I will let you see that, by day as well as by night, I am able to punish rash gentlemen who come across my path."

I merely replied to this proud speech by alighting at once. Don Augustin did the same. We tied our horses to a tree, and began the encounter with equal vigour. I must candidly confess that my antagonist understood the handling of the sword better than myself, though I had had two years' practice. He was a perfect master at fencing; my life was exposed to the greatest possible danger. Nevertheless, as it often happens that the strongest is overcome by the weakest, my rival, in spite

of all his skill, received a thrust through his heart, and fell dead in an instant.

I immediately returned to the country house, and told my valet, whose fidelity was known to me, what had happened. Then I said to him: "My dear Ramirez, take a good horse, and before the authorities can hear of this occurrence, let my aunt know. Ask her to send me some money and jewels, and meet me at Placencia, where you will find me in the first inn, as you enter the town."

Ramirez acquitted himself of his task with such diligence that he reached Placencia only three hours after me. He told me that Donna Eleonora had been more gratified than afflicted by a combat which wiped out the affront I had formerly received, and that she had sent me all her ready money and jewels, to enable me to travel with comfort in foreign lands, until she should get the matter arranged.

Not to dwell on superfluous matters, suffice it to say that I crossed New Castile to enter the kingdom of Valencia, and embarked at Denia. I landed in Italy, and there I prepared to visit the different courts, and to make a suitable appearance at each.

Whilst far from my Helena I did my best to beguile my love and my weariness, that lady was secretly bewailing my absence at Coria. Instead of approving of the proceedings which her family had instituted against me on account



of Olighera's death, she, on the contrary, desired that a speedy compromise might bring them to an end, and hasten my return. Six months had already elapsed since I had been gone; and I believe that her constancy would have for ever triumphed over time, if she had only had time to contend against; but she had still more powerful enemies. Don Blas de Combados, a gentleman from the western coast of Galicia, came to Coria to enter upon a rich inheritance which had been unsuccessfully contested by his cousin, Don Miguel de Caprara; he liked that part of the country so much better than his own that he settled there. Combados was handsome, appeared gentle, and polished, and one of the most insinuating men in the world. He had soon made the acquaintance of all the best people in the town, and gained a knowledge of their private affairs. It was not long before he learned that Don George had a daughter whose dangerous beauty seemed to inflame men only to render them unhappy. This piqued his curiosity, he was anxious to see so formidable a lady. To this end he sought her father's friendship, and succeeded so well, that the old man, already looking on him as a son-in-law, gave him the entry of his house, and the liberty of conversing with Donna Helena in his presence. The Galician soon fell in love with her; that was inevitable. He opened his heart to Don



George, who told him that he looked favourably on his suit, but that, not being willing to constrain his daughter, he left her mistress of her own hand. Thereupon Don Blas employed all the gallant devices he could think of to please the lady, who paid no attention to them; so much was her heart engrossed by me. But Felicia was in the interests of that gentleman, who had enlisted her services by various presents, and she used all her skill, whilst the father seconded the maid by his remonstrances. Yet for a whole year they only succeeded in tormenting Donna Helena, without being able to render her faithless to me.

Combados, seeing that Don George and Felicia interested themselves vainly on his behalf, devised an expedient for overcoming the obstinacy of a woman, so deeply in love as she was. "This," said he, "is what I have thought of. We will suppose a merchant of Coria to have received a letter from an Italian man of business, in which, after several details referring to trade, the following words occur:—'There has lately arrived at the court of Parma a Spanish gentleman, Don Gaston de Cogollos. He says he is the nephew and sole heir of a rich widow living at Coria, named Donna Eleonora de Laxarilla, and is paying his addresses to the daughter of a powerful nobleman; but her family will not give her to him as a wife, until assured of the truth of his

assertions. I am instructed to apply to you for this purpose. Send me word, therefore, I beg you, if you know this Don Gaston, and also in what the property of his aunt consists. On your answer this marriage will depend. Parma, etc.' ”

This rascality seemed to the old man a mere joke, a stratagem pardonable in love ; and the maid, still less scrupulous than the master, strongly approved of it. The trick seemed to them all the better contrived because they knew Donna Helena to be a proud girl, and capable of taking instantly a decision, provided she did not suspect any deception. Don George himself undertook to tell her of my inconstancy, and in order to make the story seem more plausible, to let her speak with the merchant who had received the pretended letter from Parma. This project was executed as soon as formed. The father, with counterfeit emotions of anger and indignation, said to Donna Helena :—“ Daughter, I will no longer repeat to you that all our relatives daily entreat me never to allow Don Augustin’s murderer to enter our family ; but to-day I have a stronger reason to bring forward to wean you from Don Gaston. You will be overwhelmed with shame for having been so faithful to him, for he is a fickle and treacherous man. Behold an undeniable proof of his faithlessness. Read for yourself this letter, just received by a merchant of Coria from Italy.”

The trembling Helena took the forged letter, read it, weighed every expression, and was overwhelmed by the news of my inconstancy. Then, giving way to her feelings she shed a few tears ; but soon recalling all her pride, she dried her eyes, and said, to her father in a determined tone—"Sir, you have just beheld my weakness ; now see also the victory which I will gain over myself. The delusion is past ; I feel nothing but scorn for Don Gaston, and regard him as the basest of men. Let us never speak of him again. As nothing now restrains me, I am ready to meet Don Blas at the altar. My marriage ought to precede that of the faithless man who has so ill responded to my love!" Don George, delighted at these words, embraced his daughter, praised her courageous resolution, and congratulating himself on the success of the stratagem, hastened to satisfy the wishes of my rival.

Thus was Donna Helena snatched from me. She gave herself hastily to Combados, refusing to listen to the voice of love which spoke in my favour within her breast, not even doubting for one moment tidings which a loving heart should have received with less credulity. The haughty maiden listened to nothing but her pride. Resentment at the insult she thought I had cast on her beauty got the better of her tenderness. Still, a few days after her marriage, there stole over her some feelings of remorse for

having been so precipitate. It occurred to her that the letter which the merchant had received might have been a forgery, and this suspicion caused her some uneasiness. But the amorous Don Blas did not give his wife time to cherish thoughts which robbed her of her peace; his sole study was to divert her, and in this he succeeded by an endless variety of amusements, which he was clever enough to invent.

She seemed much pleased with such a gallant husband, and they were living together very happy, when my aunt arranged my business with Don Augustin's relatives. She at once wrote to me in Italy, to let me know. I was then at Reggio, in ulterior Calabria, crossed into Sicily, and thence to Spain; and at length repaired on the wings of love to Coria. Donna Eleonora, who had not told me in her letter of the marriage of Don George's daughter, informed me of it on my arrival; and seeing how it pained me, said,—“Nephew, you are wrong to show that you care about the loss of a lady who could not remain faithful to you. Take my advice, and banish from your heart and memory a woman who is no longer worthy to occupy your thoughts.”

As my aunt was not aware that Donna Helena had been deceived, she was right in speaking thus to me; nor could she have given me better advice. So I promised to follow it, or at least to affect an air of indiffer-



ence, if I could not overcome my passion. Still, I could not resist my anxiety to know by what means this marriage had been brought about. In order to discover the truth, I resolved to apply to Felicia's friend, Dame Theodora, whom I have already mentioned to you. I went to her house, and there I accidentally met Felicia, who, not expecting to see me, was greatly disturbed, and wanted to run away, to avoid the explanation which she concluded I should demand. But I stopped her—"Why do you avoid me?" I said. "Is not the forsworn Helena satisfied with having sacrificed me, and has she also forbidden you to listen to my complaints? Or, do you only seek to escape me, to curry favour with the ungrateful creature by refusing to hearken to them?"

"Señor," replied the maid, "I frankly confess that your presence confuses me. I cannot see you again without feeling my heart torn by remorse. My mistress has been deceived, and I have the misfortune to be an accomplice in the deception. After that, can I without shame appear before you?" "Good Heavens," I exclaimed, quite surprised, "what do you dare to tell me? Explain yourself more clearly." Then the maid told me all the particulars of the stratagem which Combados had practised to rob me of Donna Helena; and seeing that her words pierced me to the heart, she did her best to console me. She offered me her



services with her mistress, promised to undeceive her and to depict to her my wretchedness; to spare nothing, in a word, to soften the rigour of my fate; and finally she gave me hopes which somewhat assuaged my sufferings.

I pass over the endless refusals which she had to endure before she could prevail on Donna Helena to consent to see me. But at last she succeeded. It was agreed between them that they should privately admit me to the house, the first time Don Blas was going to visit an estate, whither he occasionally went to hunt, and where he generally spent a day or two. This design was soon put into execution. The husband left for the country; I was informed of it, and introduced one evening into his wife's room.

I was about to begin the conversation with reproaches, but Helena soon silenced me. "It is useless to recall the past," said the lady. "We have not met to work upon each other's feelings, and you are mistaken if you think me disposed to respond to your sentiments. I declare to you, Don Gaston, that my sole inducement for granting you this secret interview, the only reason why I have yielded to your urgent entreaties, was to tell you by word of mouth that henceforth you must endeavour to forget me. Perhaps I might have been better satisfied with my fate if it had been

united to yours ; but, as Heaven has ordered it otherwise, I will obey its behests."

"What ! madam !" I answered, "is it not enough to have lost you ; not enough to see the happy Don Blas in quiet possession of the only person I can love, but I must also banish you from my thoughts ? You would tear from me even my passion, and snatch from me the only thing worth having that is left to me ! Ah, cruel woman ! Do you think it possible for a man, whom you have once charmed, to take back again his heart ? Know yourself better, and cease to exhort me in vain to drive you from my memory." "Well then," she replied hastily, "cease also to hope that I shall ever return your passion ; I have only one thing to say to you : the wife of Don Blas shall never be the mistress of Don Gaston ; you may be assured of that. Leave me !" she added. "Let us speedily end an interview with which I reproach myself, in spite of the purity of my intentions, and which I should think it a crime to prolong."

At these words, which deprived me of all hope, I threw myself at the lady's feet. I said the most moving things to her, and even resorted to tears to melt her. But all this served only to excite perhaps some sentiments of pity which she took care **not** to disclose to me, and which were sacrificed at the shrine of duty. After having fruitlessly exhausted all

my expressions of tenderness, my entreaties and my tears, my love suddenly changed to fury. I drew my sword, to stab myself before the eyes of the inexorable Helena, who no sooner saw my intention than she cast herself upon me, to prevent it. "Stay, Cogollos," she cried, "is it thus you consider my reputation? By taking your life, as you intend, you will dishonour me, and brand my husband as an assassin."

In the despair which possessed me, I did not give to these words the attention they deserved, but only tried to overcome the efforts which the mistress and the maid put forth to save me from executing my fatal design; and I should doubtless have succeeded but too soon, if Don Blas had not quickly come to their assistance. He had been apprised of our interview, and instead of going into the country, had concealed himself behind the hangings to overhear our conversation. "Don Gaston," he cried, as he arrested my arm, "recall your scattered senses, and do not yield like a coward to this transport of fury which rages within you!"

I interrupted Combados—"Is it for you," I said, "to make me turn from my resolution? You ought rather yourself to plunge a dagger in my breast. My love, unhappy as it is, is an offence against you. Is it not enough to surprise me by night in your wife's apartment; and is there more required to rouse your vengeance?"

Stab me to the heart, and rid yourself of a man who can never cease to adore Donna Helena until he ceases to live.” “It is useless,” replied Don Blas, “to appeal to my honour to make me slay you. You are sufficiently punished for your rashness; and I am so pleased by my wife’s virtuous sentiments that I forgive her the occasion which has called them forth. Take my advice, Cogollos,” he added, “and do not despair like a feeble lover; but submit with courage to necessity.”

The prudent Galician somewhat calmed my rage by such words as these, and recalled my self-respect. I withdrew, intending to remove far from Helena, and from the place where she dwelt. Two days afterwards I returned to Madrid; and, thinking only to occupy myself in advancing my fortune, I began to appear at court, where I made some friends. But I was unlucky enough to attach myself particularly to the Marquis of Villareal, a Portuguese nobleman of high rank, who, having been suspected of trying to liberate Portugal from the Spanish rule, is now a prisoner in the Castle of Alicante. As the Duke of Lerma knew me to be on intimate terms with this nobleman, he had me also arrested and brought hither. That minister thinks me capable of becoming an accomplice in such a plot; but he could not have offered a greater insult to a nobleman and a Castilian.



Don Gaston thus ended his story. To console him I said,—“My dear knight, your honour can receive no slur from this disgrace, which will undoubtedly turn to your advantage hereafter. When the Duke of Lerma shall be assured of your innocence, he will not fail to bestow on you some considerable post to retrieve the reputation of a nobleman unjustly accused of treason.”

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## CHAPTER VII.

SCIPIO COMES TO GIL BLAS IN THE TOWER OF  
SEGOVIA, AND TELLS HIM MUCH NEWS.

Our conversation was interrupted by Torde-  
sillas, who entered the room and said to me—  
“Señor Gil Blas, I have just been speaking to  
a young man who has presented himself at the  
prison gate. He inquired of me if you were  
not a prisoner here; and when I refused to  
satisfy his curiosity, he said with tears in his  
eyes—‘Noble castellan, do not reject the very  
humble request I make; pray tell me if Señor  
de Santillana is here. I am his principal ser-  
vant, and you will be doing an act of charity  
by permitting me to see him. You are con-  
sidered a very humane gentleman in Segovia;  
I hope you will not refuse me the favour of



conversing for a moment with my dear master, who is more unfortunate than guilty.' In short," continued Don Andrea, "the lad showed such a desire to speak to you that I have promised to comply with his wishes this evening."

I assured Tordesillas that he could not give me a greater pleasure than by bringing this young man to me, who, probably, had tidings to communicate which it was very important for me to know. I waited impatiently for the moment of meeting my faithful Scipio, for I did not doubt it was he; and I was not deceived. In the evening he was admitted into the tower; and his joy, which only mine could equal, broke out in the most extraordinary transports when he perceived me. As for me, in the delight which I felt on seeing him, I stretched out my arms to him, and he clasped me in his own without ceremony. Master and secretary mingled in this embrace, so glad were they to see one another!

When we had somewhat regained our composure, I questioned Scipio as to the state in which he had left my house. "You no longer have a house," answered he; "and to spare you the trouble of asking any more questions, I will tell you in a couple of words what has been going on. Your property has been plundered both by the officers of justice and by your own servants, who, thinking you were

already completely lost, took whatever was portable, for their wages. Luckily for you, I was clever enough to save from their clutches two large bags of double pistoles, which I took out of your strong-box, and which are in safe keeping. Salero, into whose custody I deposited them, will return them to you as soon as you are released from this tower, where I do not think you will long be his Majesty's pensioner, since you were arrested without the knowledge of the Duke of Lerma."

I asked Scipio how he knew that his Excellency had no hand in my disgrace. "You may depend on it," he replied, "that on this subject I have very good information. One of my friends, who is in the confidence of the Duke of Uzeda, has told me all the circumstances of your imprisonment. 'Calderon,' he said, 'having discovered through a servant that Señora Sirena was receiving the Prince of Spain by night, under another name, and that it was the Count of Lemos who was conducting that intrigue, with the assistance of Señor de Santillana, determined to be avenged on them and on his mistress. For this purpose he went privately to the Duke of Uzeda, and told him everything. This Duke, delighted to have such a good opportunity of ruining his enemy, did not fail to profit by it. He informed the King of what he had just heard, and pointed out, in the most lively colours, the dangers to which

the Prince had been exposed. This news excited his Majesty's anger, who instantly ordered Sirena to be shut up in the House of Correction,<sup>1</sup> exiled the Count de Lemos, and condemned Gil Blas to perpetual imprisonment.'"

"This," continued Scipio, "is what my friend told me. So you see that your misfortune is the work of the Duke of Uzeda, or rather of Calderon."

From this I concluded that my fortunes might be retrieved in course of time, and that the Duke of Lerma, goaded by his nephew's banishment, would spare no effort to obtain that nobleman's return to court; and I flattered myself that his Excellency would not forget me. Hope is indeed a fine thing! It consoled me at once for the loss of my stolen property, and made me as cheerful as though I had had cause to be so. Far from regarding my prison as an abode of wretchedness in which I might, perhaps, end my days, it seemed rather a means that Fortune might adopt to raise me to some high position; for thus I argued—"The Prime Minister has on his side Don Fernando de Borgia, Father Jerome of Florence, and above all Friar Lewis of Alliaga, who owes to him the position which he occupies about his Majesty's person.<sup>2</sup> With the aid of such powerful friends, his Excellency will sink all

<sup>1</sup> In the original *la Maison des Repenties*.

<sup>2</sup> Alliaga was the King's confessor.

his foes ; or the State itself will soon undergo a change. His Majesty's health is very precarious. If he were to die, the first thing his son would do, would be to recall the Count of Lemos, who will soon get me out of this place, and present me to the new monarch, who will load me with favours, to compensate me for the sufferings I have undergone." Thus, feasting by anticipation on the pleasures of the future, I almost forgot my present misfortunes. But I fancy that the two bags of doubloons, which my secretary told me he had deposited with the goldsmith, contributed as much as these anticipations to the sudden change which took place within me.

I was too well satisfied with Scipio's zeal and integrity not to give him a proof of it; I offered him half the money which he had saved from the pillage, but this he refused. "I look for another proof of your gratitude," he said. Astonished by his words as much as by his refusal, I asked him what I could do for him. "Let us never be separated," he answered. "Suffer me to cast in my lot with yours. I feel an attachment for you which I have never felt for any other master." "And I assure you, my dear lad," I said, "that you do not attach yourself to an ungrateful man. From the moment when you first offered me your services, you caught my fancy. We must have been born for each other, under Libra, or



Gemini, which are said to be the two constellations which bring men together. I gladly accept your proffered association; and by way of commencing it I will entreat the keeper to shut you up with me in this tower." "That will be delightful," he exclaimed: "you anticipate me, for I was going to ask you to beg that favour of him. Your company is dearer to me than liberty. I shall only go now and then to Madrid to hear what news there is, and see whether there is any change at court which might be favourable to you; so that you shall have in me at once a confidant, a messenger, and a spy."

These advantages were too important to be dispensed with; I therefore kept so serviceable a personage about me, with the permission of the obliging governor, who did not wish to refuse me such a pleasant consolation.

## CHAPTER VIII.

SCIPIO'S FIRST JOURNEY TO MADRID: ITS MOTIVES  
AND ITS RESULTS. GIL BLAS FALLS ILL. THE  
CONSEQUENCES OF HIS ILLNESS.

IF, as is generally said, we have no greater enemies than our servants, it ought also to be said that they are our best friends when they



are faithful and well-disposed. After the zeal displayed by Scipio, I could not look on him but as another self. So there was no more distinction between Gil Blas and his secretary, and no more ceremony; they lived in the same room, and had their bed and board in common.

Scipio's conversation was very cheerful: he might justly be dubbed a good-humoured lad. Moreover he had a clever head, and I profited greatly by his advice. "My friend," I said to him one day, "I fancy I should not do amiss to write to the Duke of Lerma; there could be no harm in it. What do you think?" "Why, as to that," he replied, "the great are so variable at different times, that I am not too sure how your letter will be received. Still, I think you should write all the same. Though the minister likes you, you must not rely on his friendship to remember you. Protectors of his sort easily forget those of whom they cease to hear."

"This may be only too true," I answered, "but judge more favourably of my patron. His kindness lives in my recollection; I am persuaded that he pities my sufferings, and that they are ever present in his mind. Probably he is only waiting for the anger of the King to subside, before he gets me out of prison." "Be it so," he rejoined; "I hope you judge his Excellency aright. Implore his assistance, then, in a very touching letter; I will take it

to him, and promise you to deliver it into his own hands." Pen, ink, and paper being brought, I composed an eloquent document, which Scipio thought pathetic, and which Tordesillas extolled above the very homilies of the Archbishop of Grenada.

I flattered myself that the Duke of Lerma would be moved by compassion, on reading the sad account I gave him of the miserable condition in which I was—not; and, convinced of this, I despatched my messenger, who no sooner got to Madrid than he went to the minister's house. One of my acquaintances, a valet whom he met, contrived to get him speech with the Duke. "My lord," said Scipio to his Excellency, as he delivered the packet with which he was entrusted, "one of your most faithful servants, now lying on straw in a dreary dungeon of the tower of Segovia, most humbly supplicates you to read this letter, which a turnkey out of pity gave him an opportunity to write." The Minister opened the letter and perused it; but though he beheld in it a picture calculated to soften the hardest heart, far from seeming touched by it, he raised his voice, and said with a furious air to my messenger, in the hearing of several persons present: "Friend, tell Santillana that I think he has a great deal of assurance to address himself to me, after the unworthy action which he has committed, and for which he is so justly punished.

The wretch must not count any longer on my protection, and I abandon him to the King's resentment."

Scipio, in spite of all his assurance, was disconcerted by this speech. But, notwithstanding his confusion, he did not fail to intercede for me. "My lord," he rejoined, "this poor prisoner will die of grief when he learns your Excellency's answer." The Duke only replied by looking askance at my advocate, and by turning his back upon him. This is the way this minister treated me, the better to conceal the part he had taken in the amorous intrigue of the Prince of Spain; and such treatment all inferior agents must expect, whom the great employ in their secret and perilous negotiations.

When my secretary returned to Segovia, and told me the result of his mission, I was once more plunged into the abyss of despondency wherein I found myself on the first day of my imprisonment. I even thought myself more unhappy, since I had no longer the protection of the Duke of Lerma. My courage fell; and in spite of all that could be said to keep it up, I again became a prey to the most acute grief, which gradually brought on a serious illness.

The keeper, who exerted himself to effect my recovery, fancied he could do no better than call in some physicians to my aid, and brought a couple of them, who had all the appearance of notable servants of the goddess

Libitina.<sup>1</sup> "Señor Gil Blas," he said, introducing them, "here are two children of Hipocrates come to see you, who will set you on your legs in no time." I was so prejudiced against all physicians that I should certainly have given them a very discouraging reception, had I been ever so little anxious to live; but I felt at that moment so tired of existence, that I was glad Tordesillas had chosen to put me into their hands.

"Worthy Señor," said one of the physicians, "before all things you must have confidence in us." "I have complete confidence in you," I replied, "and with your assistance, I am sure, I shall in a few days be cured of all my ills." "Yes, you shall, with the help of Heaven," he replied. "At least we will do what is necessary towards it." And, in fact, these gentry set about it in an admirable fashion, and took me so well in hand, that I was going to the other world as plain as could be. Already Don Andrea, despairing of my recovery, had sent for a Franciscan monk to prepare me for death; already this good father, after having fulfilled his duties, had withdrawn; and I myself, believing that my last hour had come, beckoned Scipio to my bedside. "My dear friend," I said to him, in a scarcely audible voice, so much had I been weakened with physic and blood-lettings, "I bequeath you

<sup>1</sup> The goddess who presides over funerals.



one of the bags which are at Gabriel's house, and I pray you to carry the other to my father and mother in the Asturias, who, if still living, must be in need of them. But alas! I much fear that they have been unable to survive my ingratitude. The report which Muscada will doubtless have given them of my hard-heartedness, has, perhaps, caused their death. If Heaven has preserved them, in spite of the indifference wherewith I have rewarded their affection, you will give them the bag of doubloons, praying them to forgive me for not having treated them better; and if they are no more, I charge you to apply this money in prayers to Heaven for the repose of their souls and of my own." Whilst saying these words I held out my hand to him, which he bathed with his tears, unable to answer a word, so much was the poor fellow afflicted at the prospect of losing me! This proves that the tears of an heir are not always masked smiles!

I expected therefore to make my exit; but my expectation was deceived. My physicians having abandoned me, left a fair field to nature, and thereby saved my life. The fever which, according to their prognostication, ought to have carried me off, left me as though to give them the lie. By the greatest good luck in the world, I gradually got better; a perfect tranquillity of mind was the result of my illness. I had no need then of being con-



soled. For wealth and honours I retained all the scorn with which the idea of approaching death had inspired me; and coming again to my senses I blessed my misfortune, and thanked Heaven for it as for a special favour. I firmly resolved never to return to court, even if the Duke of Lerma should recall me. On the other hand, I intended, if ever I should get out of prison, to buy a cottage, and live there like a philosopher.

My confidant praised my resolve, and said that, in order to hasten its execution, he proposed to go again to Madrid to solicit my release. "An idea strikes me," he added; "I know some one who may help you. She is the favourite maid of the Prince's nurse, and an intelligent girl. I will induce her to use her influence with her mistress, and shall attempt everything to get you out of this tower, which is still a prison, however well they may treat you." "You are right," I replied; "go, my friend, without loss of time, and set this negotiation on foot. Would to Heaven we were already in our retreat!"

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## CHAPTER IX.

SCIPIO RETURNS TO MADRID. HOW AND ON WHAT CONDITIONS HE OBTAINED GIL BLAS' RELEASE. WHERE THEY WENT ON LEAVING THE TOWER OF SEGOVIA; AND THE CONVERSATION THAT PASSED BETWEEN THEM.

SCIPIO, therefore, went once more to Madrid; and I, awaiting his return, devoted myself to reading. Tordesillas supplied me with more books than I wanted. He borrowed them from an old commander who could not read, but who had a fine library, nevertheless, in order to pass for a man of learning. Above all I liked good moral works, because in them I continually came across passages which flattered my antipathy to courts and my taste for solitude.

I spent three weeks without hearing anything from my agent. At last he returned, and said cheerfully. "This time, Señor de Santillana, I bring you good news! The nurse is enlisted in your favour. Her maid, at my entreaty, and for a hundred pistoles which I gave her, was kind enough to induce her to prevail on the Prince of Spain to obtain your liberty; and this Prince, who, as I told you before, can refuse her nothing, has promised to ask his royal

father for your release. I came to tell you this, as soon as I could, and I am going back at once to put the finishing touch to my work." With these words he left me, and went back to court.

His third journey did not last long. Within eight days my agent returned and told me that the Prince had obtained my release from the King, not without some difficulty. This was confirmed on the same day by the worthy keeper, who embraced me, saying—"My dear Gil Blas, thank Heaven you are free! The gates of this prison are open to you; but on two conditions, which perhaps may give you much pain, and with which I regret I am obliged to acquaint you. His Majesty forbids you to appear at court, and orders you to leave the two Castiles within a month. I am very much grieved that you are forbidden the court." "And I am delighted at it," I replied. "Heaven knows my thoughts! I expected but one favour from the King, and he has granted me two."

Assured, then, that I was no longer a prisoner, I hired a couple of mules, on which my confidant and I mounted next day, after having bade farewell to Cogollos, and thanked Tordesillas a thousand times for all the marks of friendship I had received from him. We set out cheerfully for Madrid, to recover from Señor Gabriel our two bags, each containing

five hundred doubloons. On the way my fellow-traveller observed—"If we are not rich enough to buy a splendid estate, we can at least purchase a moderate one." "If we had only a hut," I replied, "I should be satisfied with my lot. Though I am hardly in the prime of life,<sup>1</sup> I feel weaned from the world, and I mean henceforth to live only for myself. Besides, I can assure you, that I have formed a charming conception of rural life, which enchants me, and makes me anticipate it with pleasure. Already I seem to see the enamelled meads, to hear the nightingales sing, and the streamlets murmur: now I fancy myself hunting, now fishing. Imagine, my friend, the various pleasures which await us in solitude, and you will be as charmed by them as I am. And for our food, the simpler the better. A piece of bread will satisfy us; when we are pressed by hunger, we shall eat it with an appetite which will make us think it excellent. Pleasure does not depend on the quality of exquisite dishes, but centres wholly in ourselves; and so true is this, that my most delicious repasts are not those where taste and abundance abound. Frugality is a source of delight which works wonders for our health."

"With your permission, Señor Gil Blas," interrupted my secretary, "I am not quite of

<sup>1</sup> See vol. i., INTRODUCTORY NOTICE, p. xxvii.

your opinion as to the pretended frugality with which you would regale me. Why should we nourish ourselves like Diogenes? If we fare not quite so badly we shall be none the worse for it. Since we have, thank Heaven, the means of rendering our retirement pleasant, take my advice, and let us not make it an abode of hunger and poverty. As soon as we have got an estate, we ought to stock it with good wine, and with all other provisions suitable to intelligent people, who abandon intercourse with men, not to renounce the comforts of life, but rather to enjoy them with the greater tranquillity. ‘A man does not come to harm,’ says Hesiod, ‘from having a certain thing in his house; but may come to harm through not having it. It is better,’ he adds, ‘to possess necessaries than to have to wish for them.’”

“What the deuce, Master Scipio,” I interrupted in my turn, “do you know the Greek poets? Pray, where did you get acquainted with Hesiod?” “In the house of a learned man,” he replied. “I lived for some time with a pedant at Salamanca, who was a great commentator, and who would put you together a big volume in less than no time. He made it up of passages from the Hebrew, Greek, and Latin tongues, which he took from books in his library, and translated into Spanish. As I was his amanuensis, I have



retained no end of sentences, quite as remarkable as the one I have just quoted." "If that be so," I answered, "you must have a well stored memory. But to return to our project: in what part of Spain do you propose that we should establish our philosopher's dwelling?" "I vote for Aragon," replied my confidant. "We shall find there some charming spots, where we can lead a delightful life." "Well," I rejoined, "so be it; let us fix on Aragon; I agree. May we find there an abode which will provide all the pleasures whereon my imagination feeds!"

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## CHAPTER X.

WHAT THEY DID ON REACHING MADRID. WHOM  
GIL BLAS MET IN THE STREET; AND THE CON-  
SEQUENCE OF THIS MEETING.

ON our arrival at Madrid, we went to a small boarding-house where Scipio had been accustomed to put up during his late journeys; and the next thing we did was to go to Salero's house, in order to recover our doubloons. He received us very civilly, and expressed much pleasure at seeing me at liberty. "I declare to you," he said, "that I have felt your disgrace so much, that it has disgusted me with the

alliances of courtiers. Their fortunes are too precarious; so I have married my daughter Gabriela to a wealthy merchant." "You have done quite right," I replied; "such an arrangement has not only a more solid foundation, but a citizen who becomes father-in-law to a man of quality is not always pleased with his fine son-in-law."

Then, changing the subject, and coming to the point, I said—"Señor Gabriel, please be good enough to hand us the two thousand pistoles which. . . ." "Your money is quite ready," interrupted the goldsmith, and taking us into his private room, he showed us two bags, having these words ticketed on them—"These bags of doubloons belong to Señor Gil Blas of Santillana." "There they are," he said to me, "just as they were intrusted to my care."

I thanked Salero for the service he had rendered me; and easily consoled at having lost his daughter, we took the bags with the double pistoles to our lodgings, where we examined them. We found them all right, deducting the fifty which had been employed to procure my release. Our thoughts were now wholly bent on preparing for our journey to Aragon. My secretary undertook to buy a carriage and two mules, whilst I was going to purchase household linen, underclothing and clothes. As I was wandering from one place to another, making purchases, I met Baron Steinbach, the

officer of the German guard, in whose house Don Alphonso had been brought up.

I bowed to the German gentleman, who recognising me, accosted and embraced me. "I am extremely pleased," I said, "to see your lordship<sup>1</sup> in such excellent health, and at the same time to have an opportunity of hearing some news of my dear lords, Don Cæsar, and Don Alphonso de Leyva." "I can give you some precise information about them," he replied, "since they are both in Madrid, and staying, moreover, in my house. They came to town about three months ago, to thank the King for a favour bestowed on Don Alphonso, in recognition of the services rendered by his ancestors to the state. He has been appointed governor of the town of Valencia, without having asked for this post, or desired anyone to solicit it for him. Nothing could be more flattering; and this shows that our monarch likes to reward merit."

Though I knew better than Steinbach what to think about that, I did not pretend to have the slightest knowledge of what he mentioned. I expressed such a desire to pay my respects to my old masters that, in order to satisfy it, he took me to his house at once. I was curious to test Don Alphonso, and to judge by his reception whether he still retained some affec-

<sup>1</sup> The original has *votre seigneurie*, an example not given in vol. i., INTRODUCTORY NOTICE, pages xxxvii. and xxxviii.

tion for me. He was in the drawing-room, playing chess with Baroness Steinbach. As soon as he saw me, he left off playing, rose, advanced towards me quite delighted, and embracing me, said, in a tone of genuine pleasure, "Santillana, I am overjoyed that you are restored to me at last. It was not my fault that we ever parted. I begged you, if you remember, not to leave the Castle of Leyva, but you paid no heed to my entreaties. However, I do not reproach you for it; I am even beholden to you for the motive of your withdrawal. But, since that time, you ought to have let me hear from you, and spared me the pain of in vain inquiring for you at Grenada, where my brother-in-law, Don Ferdinand, had sent me word that you were."

"After this gentle reproach," he continued, "tell me what you are doing at Madrid. You seem to have some situation here. Believe me that I shall always take a great interest in all that concerns you." "Señor," I replied, "not four months ago, I filled a rather important post at court; I had the honour of being the Duke of Lerma's confidential secretary." "Is it possible?" cried Don Alphonso, extremely astonished. "What! you were in the Prime Minister's confidence?" "I was his favourite," I replied, "and I am going to tell you how I lost his favour." Then I related my whole story to him, and ended my narrative with



avowing my determination to buy, with the small amount of wealth remaining to me from my former prosperity, a cottage wherein to lead a life of retirement.

Don Cæsar's son, having listened to me with close attention, replied—"My dear Gil Blas, you know that I always liked you. You are still dearer to me than ever, and I must give you proof of it, since Heaven has put me in a position to increase your possessions. You shall no longer be the sport of Fortune. I will deliver you from her power, by securing to you a property which she cannot take from you. As you wish to live in the country, a small estate which we have near Lirias, about four leagues from Valencia shall be settled on you. You are acquainted with the spot. Such a present we can make to you without inconveniencing ourselves; I can answer for my father's consent, as well as for the genuine pleasure it will cause to Seraphina."

I threw myself at Don Alphonso's feet, who raised me instantly. I kissed his hand, and more delighted by the goodness of his heart than by his gift, I said, "My lord, your conduct charms me. The gift which you make me is the more acceptable, because it precedes the acknowledgment of a service which I have rendered you; and I would sooner owe it to your generosity than to your gratitude." Don Alphonso was rather surprised at these



words, and did not fail to ask me what was the service I referred to. I told it him ; and my information increased his astonishment. Neither he nor the Baron Steinbach could ever have the slightest suspicion that the governorship of Valencia had been conferred on Don Alphonso through my influence. But, as he did not doubt my veracity, he said to me, "Gil Blas, since it is to you I owe my post, I will not confine my gratitude to the little estate of Lirias ; but I will settle on you, in addition, an annuity of two thousand ducats."

"Stay, Don Alphonso," I here broke in ; "do not rouse my avarice. Wealth serves but to corrupt my morals ; I have only too much experience of this. I gladly accept your estate at Lirias, where, moreover, I shall live comfortably with the money I have. But that is enough ; and far from desiring more, I would rather consent to lose the superfluity of what I possess. Riches are a burden in a retirement where we only look for tranquillity."

Whilst we were thus conversing, Don Cæsar came in. He displayed as much pleasure at seeing me as his son ; and when he was informed of the obligation which his family were under to me, he also urged me to accept the annuity, which I again refused. Finally, the father and son took me immediately to a notary, where they had a deed of gift drawn up ; and both signed it with more pleasure than

they would have felt in signing a deed to their own advantage. When the document was executed they put it into my hands, telling me that the estate of Lirias was no longer theirs, and that I might go and take possession of it, as soon as I pleased. Then they returned to the house of Baron Steinbach. As for me, I hastened to our boarding-house, where my secretary was enraptured when I told him that we had an estate in the kingdom of Valencia, and related to him how I had acquired it. "How much may this little estate be worth?" he asked. "It brings in five hundred ducats a year," I replied, "and I can assure you it is a delightful solitude; I know it, from having often been there as the steward of the Lords of Leyva. There is a small house on the banks of the Guadalaviar, and a hamlet of five or six dwellings, in the midst of a charming country."

"What pleases me better than all," exclaimed Scipio, "is that there we shall have plenty of game, with Benicarlo wine, and excellent muscadine. Come, master, let us make haste to leave the world, and reach our hermitage." "I long to be there as much as you can do," I rejoined; "but first of all I must make a journey to the Asturias. My father and mother are not in prosperous circumstances; so I mean to fetch them, and take them with me to Lirias, where they shall spend their last days in peace. Perhaps Heaven has enabled me to find this

refuge, on purpose to receive them, and would punish me if I neglected to do so." Scipio approved my intention, and even urged me to carry it out speedily. "Let us lose no time," he said, "I have already secured a carriage; we'll buy the mules at once, and set out for Oviedo." "Yes, friend," I answered, "let us leave as soon as possible. I consider it an indispensable duty to share the pleasures of my retirement with the authors of my existence. We shall soon be settled in our country-retreat; and, when I arrive there I will inscribe over the door of my house these two Latin verses in letters of gold:

"Inveni portum. Spes et Fortuna, valete!  
Sat me lusistis; ludite nunc alios!<sup>1</sup>"

<sup>1</sup> I am in the harbour. Hope and Fortune, farewell!

You have played with me enough: play with others now!

These words are given by Lesage in Latin. It was apparently our author's original intention to finish *Gil Blas* with this ninth book; but its great success induced him to publish, eleven years later, three books more, which are not inferior to the others.



## BOOK X.





## CHAPTER I.

GIL BLAS SETS OUT FOR THE ASTURIAS. HE PASSES THROUGH VALLADOLID, WHERE HE GOES TO SEE HIS OLD MASTER, DOCTOR SANGRADO. BY ACCIDENT HE MEETS SENOR MANUEL ORDONNEZ, A GOVERNOR OF THE HOSPITAL.

JUST as I was preparing to leave Madrid with Scipio, in order to proceed to the Asturias, Paul V. gave the Duke of Lerma a Cardinal's hat.<sup>1</sup> This pope, desiring to establish the Inquisition in the Kingdom of Naples, invested the minister with the purple, in order to induce him to make King Philip consent to such a praiseworthy scheme. Those who were best acquainted with this new member of the sacred college, thought, as I did, that the Church had made a great acquisition.

Scipio, who would rather have seen me restored to a brilliant position at court, than buried in solitude, advised me to present my-

<sup>1</sup> In the *Journal du Voyage d'Espagne, etc.*, p. 192, it is stated that "The Duke of Lerma . . . had stolen so much that they told me he got appointed Cardinal for fear of being hanged. He governed under Philip III. ; and as his seat was near Valladolid, and as he was Alcalde of the palace of that town, he induced the King always to live there." The duke was made a Cardinal in 1618. See also vol. i., INTRODUCTORY NOTICE, page xxi.

self to the new Cardinal. "Perhaps," said he, "his Eminence, finding that the King has liberated you from prison, may no longer think it necessary to seem irritated against you, and take you back into his service." "Master Scipio," I replied, "you apparently forget that I have obtained my liberty on condition of instantly leaving the two Castiles. Besides, do you think I am already tired of my mansion at Lirias? I have told you before, and I repeat it, that even if the Duke of Lerma should restore me his favour, and offer me the place of Don Rodrigo de Calderon, I would refuse it. My mind is made up: I mean to go to Oviedo for my parents, and retire with them to the neighbourhood of Valencia. As for you, my friend, if you repent of having linked your fate with mine, you need only tell me so; I am ready to give you half of my ready money, with which you can remain in Madrid, and advance your fortune as far as you are able."

"Indeed!" replied my secretary, somewhat moved by these words; "can you suspect me of any reluctance to follow you into retirement? Such a suspicion wrongs my zeal and my affection for you. What! Scipio, the faithful servant who, to share your sufferings, would willingly have spent the remainder of his days with you in the tower of Segovia, shrink from accompanying you to a residence where he

promises himself a thousand pleasures ! No, sir, no, I have not the slightest desire to shake your resolution. I must confess my duplicity. When I advised you to present yourself to the Duke of Lerma, it was because I wanted to test you, and see whether you still retained any germs of ambition. But as you are so weaned from greatness, let us quickly abandon the court, and proceed to enjoy those innocent and delightful pleasures of which we have formed such a charming forecast."

In fact, we soon afterwards set out in a carriage drawn by two good mules, and driven by a lad whom I thought it right to add to my establishment. The first night we slept at Alcala de Henares, and the second at Segovia, whence, without stopping to visit the generous keeper Tordesillas, I proceeded to Penafiel, on the Duero, and the next day to Valladolid.<sup>1</sup> At the sight of this last town I could not help drawing a deep sigh. My companion, who heard it, asked me the cause. "My dear fellow," I said to him, "here I once practised medicine for a long time. I cannot think of it calmly, and just now my conscience secretly

<sup>1</sup> Alcala de Henares is about ten English miles east of Madrid, and Segovia about thirty west. Father Isla substitutes for the first town Las Rosas, a village about half-way between Madrid and Segovia ; Llorente prefers Galapagar, another station on the same route. Everett proposes Colmenar, where Gil Blas is represented as having changed horses twice before, on taking the same journey. See vol. iii. bk. ix. ch. 3 ; and bk. xi. ch. 13.

upbraids me. What am I saying? It seems to me that all the patients whom I killed, are quitting their tombs to tear me to pieces.” “What a fancy!” replied my secretary. “Really, Señor de Santillana, you are too soft-hearted. Why repent of having exercised your calling? Look at the oldest physicians; do they feel any such remorse? Oh no! They pursue steadily the tenour of their way, throwing the blame of all unlucky accidents on nature, and taking to themselves credit for fortunate results.”

“It is true,” I rejoined, “that Dr Sangrado, whose method I faithfully followed, was of such a temper. Though he saw a score of people die daily under his hands, he was so persuaded of the excellence of blood-letting and frequent drenchings, which he called his two specifics for every kind of malady, that, instead of blaming his remedies, he believed his patients only died through not drinking enough, and not being sufficiently bled.” “By Heavens!” exclaimed Scipio, with a burst of laughter, “you are depicting to me an incomparable personage.” “If you are anxious to see and hear him,” I said, “you may satisfy your curiosity to-morrow, should Sangrado be still living, and reside in Valladolid, which is highly improbable; for he was already old when I left him, and a good many years have passed since then.”

Our first thought, on reaching the inn where



we meant to put up, was to inquire after the doctor. We were told that he was not dead, but that, being incapacitated by his age from paying visits or from making any great exertions, he had given up the field to three or four other physicians, who had acquired reputation by a new system, hardly better than his own. We resolved, therefore, to stop at Valladolid the next day, as well to let our mules rest as to call on Doctor Sangrado. We went to his house about ten o'clock next morning, and found him in his arm-chair, with a book in his hand. He rose on our entrance, advanced to meet us with a tolerably firm step for a man of seventy, and asked us what we wanted. "Doctor," I said, "please look at me closely. Don't you recollect me? Anyhow I have the honour of being one of your pupils. Do you not remember a certain Gil Blas, who used formerly to live with you and be your deputy?" "What, is it you, Santillana?" he replied, embracing me affectionately. "I should not have known you again. I am very glad to see you. What have you been doing since we parted? No doubt you have continued to practise medicine?" "I felt very much inclined to do so," I answered; "but have been prevented by force of circumstances."

"So much the worse," replied Sangrado. "With the principles taught you, you would have become a physician of eminence, provided

Heaven had given you grace to preserve you from a dangerous inclination for chemistry. Ah, my son !” he continued, in a sorrowful and declamatory tone, “ what a change has taken place in medicine within a few years ! If I seem to be moved and indignant at it, it is not without reason. The honour and dignity of the art are gone. This art, which in every age has respected human life, is now given over to rashness, presumption, and empiricism ;<sup>1</sup> for facts are stubborn things, and ere long the very stones will cry out against the villainy of these new practitioners : *lapides clamabunt*. In this town, you may see physicians, or men who call themselves so, who have yoked themselves to the chariot of antimony : *currus triumphalis antimonii*,<sup>2</sup> truants from the school of Paracelsus, worshippers of *kermes*, haphazard curers, who make the whole science of medicine consist in the knowledge of how to make up a few chemical drugs ! What shall I say ? Everything is changed in their system. Bleeding in the feet, for instance, once so rare, is now almost the only kind in practice.<sup>3</sup> The old, mild, and

<sup>1</sup> In the original, *impéritie* ; then a new word.

<sup>2</sup> The use of antimony had given rise to many quarrels among physicians. In 1566 its employment was forbidden in Paris, but a hundred years later a sentence of the parliament of that city allowed it to be given as a remedy.

<sup>3</sup> It was common in Spain in former times to bleed in the foot. In several of the travels quoted in the INTRODUCTORY NOTICE, the

benign purgatives are changed for emetics and *kermes*. It is nothing now but a chaos, in which everyone does what he pleases, and transgresses the limits of order and prudence which our earlier masters had laid down."

However much I was disposed to laugh on hearing such a comical outburst, I succeeded in restraining my merriment; nay, more, I envenighed against *kermes* without knowing what it meant, and, at all risks, sent to the deuce those who had invented it. Scipio, seeing that I was getting merry over the scene, wished to contribute his share to it. "Doctor," said he to Sangrado, "permit me, as grand-nephew to a physician of the old school, to join with you in your protest against chemical remedies. My late grand-uncle, whom Heaven assoil, was so warm a partizan of Hippocrates that he often did battle with the quacks who spoke with too little reverence of this king of the healing art. What is bred in the bone will come out in the flesh;<sup>1</sup> I would gladly act as executioner to these ignorant innovators of whom you complain so justly and eloquently. What confusion do not these wretches create in civilised society!"

"That confusion," said the doctor, "goes reason for this is given. The curious can look it out in these books, and above all, in the eleventh letter of the Countess d'Aulnoy's *Relation*.

<sup>1</sup>The original has, *Bon sang ne peut mentir*, Good blood cannot lie.

further than you think. It was no use my publishing a book against the villainy of the physicians;<sup>1</sup> on the contrary, it increases every day. Surgeons, mad with the ambition of acting as physicians, think themselves capable of prescribing, since the only thing needful is to give *kermes* and emetics, to which is added bleeding in the feet, when the humour takes them. They even go so far as to mix *kermes* with apozems and cordials, and then they are on a level with the great practitioners. The contagion has spread even to the convents. There are some brothers among the monks who are at once apothecaries and surgeons.<sup>2</sup> These medical baboons dabble in chemistry, and compose pernicious drugs, wherewith they shorten the lives of their reverend fathers. Now there are in Valladolid more than sixty monasteries, both for men and women; so you may judge what ravages *kermes* must make, together with emetics<sup>3</sup> and bleeding in the feet!" "Doctor

<sup>1</sup> This strengthens the idea that in depicting Sangrado Lesage wished to have a hit at doctor Héquet, who had published in 1732, three years before the last volume of *Gil Blas* saw the light, a book called *Le Brigandage de la Médecine*, which produced some sensation. See also vol. i. bk. ii. ch. v. p. 168, note 2.

<sup>2</sup> About the beginning of the eighteenth century father Simon, an apothecary of the Carthusian convent at Paris, brought *kermes* into fashion, which was the invention of a German chemist. Llorente pretends that it had been already known for several centuries by the Moors, as well as in Spain.

<sup>3</sup> Emetics were only generally adopted in France since 1658, when Louis XIV. was cured by them. According to the Spanish critic Llorente, so often quoted, they had been in use in Spain before that time.



Sangrado," I here said; "you are perfectly right to be angry with these poisoners; I join my lamentations with yours and share your alarm for human life, plainly menaced by a system so different from your own. I much fear that chemistry will one day bring about the complete destruction of medicine, just as adulterated coin causes the ruin of States. Heaven grant that this fatal day be not close at hand!"

At this point of our conversation an old maid-servant made her appearance, with a salver for the doctor, on which were a small roll, a glass, and two decanters, one of which was full of water, and the other of wine. After he had eaten a small piece of bread, he drank a glass of wine and water, in which there were indeed three parts of water; but this did not prevent the reproaches which it gave me occasion to make. "So, so, Doctor," I said, "I have caught you in the act. You drink wine, you who always declared against that liquor; you who for three-quarters of your life drank only water, and who are the cause why I have not drunk a drop of wine these ten years! How long have you thus contradicted yourself? You cannot excuse yourself on your age, because in one passage of your writings you define old age as a natural phthisis which dries us up and consumes us; and in consequence of this definition you deplore the ignorance of those who



call wine the milk of old age. What will you say to justify yourself?"

"You attack me very unjustly," replied the old physician, "if I drank wine neat, you would have a right to regard me as a faithless observer of my own system, but you see that my wine is very much diluted." "Another inconsistency, my dear master," I replied; "remember you disapproved of Canon Sedillo's drinking wine, though he mixed it with a great deal of water. Confess candidly that you have recognised your error, and that wine is not a mischievous liquor, as you maintained in your works, provided it is only drunk in moderation."

These words rather embarrassed our doctor. He could not deny that he had forbidden the use of wine in his books; but as shame and vanity prevented him from admitting that I censured him justly, he did not know what to answer, and was much confused. To relieve him I changed the subject, and a few minutes afterwards took leave of him, exhorting him to persevere in making a stand against the new practitioners. "Courage! Dr Sangrado," I said to him; "never be weary of preaching against *kermes*; oppose without ceasing bleeding in the feet. If, in spite of your zeal, and your love of medical orthodoxy, this generation of quacks should succeed in ruining true discipline, you will at least enjoy the consolation of having done all you could to maintain it."

As my secretary and I were returning to our inn, conversing upon the original and amusing character of the doctor, there passed us in the street a man from fifty-five to sixty years of age, walking with his eyes fixed on the ground, and holding a large rosary in his hand. I looked at him attentively, and soon recognised Señor Manuel Ordoñez, the faithful governor of the hospital, so honourably mentioned in the first volume of my history. I accosted him with great demonstrations of respect, saying: "I trust the venerable and judicious Señor Manuel Ordoñez, the fittest man in the world to look after the interest of the poor, is quite well." At these words he eyed me closely, and replied that my features were not unknown to him, but that he could not remember where he had seen me. "I don't wonder at it," I answered; "it is not surprising that you don't recognise me; I used to come to your house when one of my friends, named Fabricio Nunez, was in your service." "Ah! I remember you now," replied the governor, with an ironical smile; "and by the same token you were two fine fellows, and played many youthful pranks between you. Well! and what has become of poor Fabricio? Whenever I think of him I cannot help feeling a little uneasy about his affairs."

"It is to give you some tidings of him," I said to Señor Manuel, "that I have taken the

liberty of stopping you in the street. Fabricio is settled in Madrid, where he is occupied in publishing miscellanies." "What are miscellanies?" he replied; "they may mean anything." "I mean," resumed I, "that he writes in verse and prose; he composes comedies and novels; in a word he is a young man of genius, who is very well received in the best families." "But," said the governor, "how does he get on with his baker?" "Not so well," I replied, "as with persons of quality. Between ourselves, I don't think he is very well off." "Oh, I can easily believe that," remarked Ordoñez. "Let him pay court to great lords as much as he likes; his complaisance, his flatteries, and his cringing will bring him in still less than his writings. I predict that some day or other you will see him in the hospital."

"That is possible," I replied; "poetry has brought many a man there. My friend Fabricio would have done much better to remain with your worship<sup>1</sup>; he would have been rolling in gold by this time." "At all events he would have been in very easy circumstances," said Manuel. "I liked him, and I intended, by raising him from one situation to another, to have got him a settled position in the public charity offices; but he

<sup>1</sup> The original has *votre seigneurie*. See vol. i., INTRODUCTORY NOTICE, p. xxxvii., 7°.

took a fancy to set up for a wit. What a foolish fellow! He wrote a play which was performed by some actors in this town; the piece succeeded, and from that moment the author's head was turned. He thought himself a new Lope de Vega; and preferring the vain glory of public applause to the substantial benefits which my friendship was preparing for him, he came to me for his discharge. I pitied him and wanted him to change his mind; I vainly pointed out that he was dropping the bone to pursue the shadow; but could not restrain the silly fellow, who was carried away by a rage for authorship. He did not know his own interests," added the director; "the lad, whom I took into my service after him, is no bad proof of it. Possessing more common sense than Fabricio, though less intelligence, he only has devoted himself to the careful performance of his duties, and to giving me satisfaction. So I have promoted him, as he deserved, and now he holds two posts at the hospital, of which the smallest is more than enough to maintain an honest man, encumbered with a large family."

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## CHAPTER II.

GIL BLAS CONTINUES HIS JOURNEY, AND ARRIVES IN SAFETY AT OVIEDO. IN WHAT CONDITION HE FOUND HIS PARENTS. HIS FATHER'S DEATH, AND THE CONSEQUENCES OF THIS EVENT.

FROM Valladolid we got to Oviedo in four days, without meeting with any accident on the road, in spite of the proverb which says that thieves smell the money of travellers from afar. Yet there would have been a good haul for them, and only a couple of gentlemen from the cave<sup>1</sup> might easily have carried off our doubloons; for I had not learned courage at court; and Bertrand, my muleteer, did not seem inclined to be killed in defence of his master's purse. Scipio was the only one of the party who was something of a swordsman.

It was night when we entered the town. We took lodgings at an inn close to the house of my uncle, Gil Perez the Canon. I was glad of the opportunity of ascertaining the situation of my parents before making my appearance; and in order to gain that information, I could not have applied to anyone better than to

<sup>1</sup> An allusion to Captain Rolando's band, for which see vol. i., bk. i., chaps. 4-10.



the landlord and landlady of my inn, whom I knew to be persons well acquainted with all their neighbours' concerns. As it turned out, the landlord, recognising me after an attentive perusal of my features, cried out, "By Saint Antony of Padua<sup>1</sup>! this is the son of the worthy gentleman Blas of Santilana." "Yes, to be sure," said the landlady; "that he is! I remember him well; he is hardly changed at all, and is just the same sprightly little Gil Blas, who had more sense in his head than flesh on his bones. I think I see him yet, coming here with his bottle, to fetch wine for his uncle's supper."

"Madam," said I, "you have an excellent memory; but pray give me some tidings of my family. I fear my father and mother are not very well off," "That is but too true," replied the landlady; "however badly off you may picture them, you could not imagine persons more to be pitied. Honest Gil Perez is half paralysed, and it does not look as if he would last long. Your father, who went to live with the Canon for some time, has an inflammation of the lungs, and is, in fact, at this moment between life and death; while your mother, who is none too well herself, is

<sup>1</sup> St Antony of Padua, a Portuguese Saint, enjoyed a great reputation over the whole of the Peninsula. In 1705 he was appointed commander in chief of the Portuguese army, and as he had been dead many years, the monks of his convent received his salary.

obliged to nurse them both. That is how you will find them."

On hearing this account, which stirred up my filial affection, I left Bertrand with my luggage at the inn; and followed by my secretary, who did not want to leave me, I went to my uncle's house. As soon as I appeared before my mother, an inward emotion seemed to tell her of my presence, before her eyes had made out my features. After she had embraced me, she said, sorrowfully, "Son, come and see your father die; you have arrived just in time to be impressed by this cruel spectacle." After having spoken these words she took me into a room where the unhappy Blas of Santilana, lying on a bed which plainly showed how poor he was, was at his last gasp. Though already enveloped by the shadows of death, he was not quite unconscious. "My dearest friend," said my mother to him, "here is your son Gil Blas, who entreats your forgiveness for the grief he has caused you, and is come to ask for your blessing." At these words, my father opened his eyes, which were on the point of closing for ever; he fixed them upon me; and reading in my countenance, in spite of his own lamentable condition, that I was sincerely mourning for his loss, he was softened by my sorrow. He even tried to speak, but his strength was too much exhausted. I took one of his hands in mine, and while I bathed it

with my tears, unable to utter one word, he expired, as though he had only waited for my arrival to breathe his last.

My mother had been too long expecting this death to be immoderately afflicted at it. I was, perhaps, more overwhelmed by it than she, although my father had never shown me the least sign of affection in his life. Not only was my sorrow justified by filial affection, but I reproached myself for not having assisted him; and when I remembered how hard-hearted I had been, I regarded myself as a monster of ingratitude, or rather as a parricide. My uncle, whom I afterwards saw lying on another truckle bed, and in a most pitiable condition, made me feel fresh remorse. All that I owed to him returned to my mind. "Unnatural son!" I said to myself; "this is your punishment to behold the wretched condition of your relatives. If you had given them a small share of the superfluity of wealth which you possessed before your imprisonment, you would have provided them with those comforts which the income of the prebend could not supply, and you might, perhaps, have prolonged your father's life."

The unfortunate Gil Perez had fallen into a state of second childhood, having lost his memory and understanding. It was useless for me to press him in my arms and give him evidences of my affection; he seemed insen-

sible to it. It was in vain my mother told him that I was his nephew Gil Blas ; he gazed at me with a vacant stare, and made no answer. If the ties of blood and gratitude had not made me pity an uncle to whom I owed so much, I could not have felt otherwise, when I saw him in a condition so deserving of compassion.

All this time Scipio maintained a gloomy silence, sharing my grief, and in his friendship, mingling his sighs with mine. But, as I thought my mother, after so long an absence, would like to have some conversation with me, and as the presence of a man whom she did not know might make her uneasy, I drew him aside, and said, " Go, my dear fellow ; go and take some rest at the inn, and leave me here with my mother ; we must have a talk which will last some time. If you stayed here the good lady might, perhaps, think your presence superfluous during a conversation which will turn entirely on family matters." Scipio withdrew, for fear of being a cause of constraint to us ; and then, indeed, I had a conversation with my mother which lasted the whole night. We gave each other a faithful account of all that had happened to each of us since my departure from Oviedo. She told me circumstantially all the pangs she had suffered among those families where she had been as duenna, and gave me numberless details on this subject, which I should not much have liked



my secretary to hear ; though I had no secrets from him. With all the respect I owe to my mother's memory, the good lady was rather prolix in her narratives, and would have spared me three-fourths of her story if she had suppressed what was unnecessary.

At length she finished her narrative, and I began my own. I passed lightly over all my adventures ; but when I spoke of the visit which the son of Bertrand Muscada, the grocer of Oviedo, had paid me at Madrid, I enlarged upon it. "I must frankly confess," I said to my mother, "that I received the young fellow very badly, and he, to revenge himself, must have drawn a terrible portrait of me." "He certainly did," she replied. "He told us that he found you so proud of the Prime Minister's favour that you hardly condescended to recognise him ; and that, when he mentioned to you our wretched circumstances, you listened to him as if you took no interest in the matter. But, as all fathers and mothers," she added, "ever try to find excuses for their children, we could not believe that you were so hard-hearted. Your coming to Oviedo justifies the good opinion we had of you, and your present grief completes your apology."

"You think too favourably of me," I replied ; "there was a good deal of truth in young Muscada's report. When he came to see me I was completely absorbed by the care of



making my fortune ; and the ambition which possessed me, hardly permitted me to think of my relatives. Therefore, it is not astonishing if, being in this mood, I gave so bad a reception to a man who, peremptorily accosting me, told me in a gruff manner, that having heard I was as rich as a Jew, he had come to advise me to send you some money, as you greatly needed it. He even reproached me, in unmeasured terms, with my indifference towards my family. I was offended at his outspokenness, and losing patience, pushed him by the shoulders out of my room. I admit I was in the wrong, and that I ought to have reflected that it was not your fault if the grocer lacked politeness; and that his advice was not the less pertinent, even though given rudely."

"Such were my thoughts, directly after I had turned Muscada out. In spite of my anger the voice of consanguinity made itself heard. I remembered my duty to my parents, and blushing with shame at having discharged it so badly, I felt some remorse ; for which, however, I can take no credit, since it was soon silenced by avarice and ambition. But some time afterwards, having been imprisoned by the King's order in the tower of Segovia, I there fell dangerously ill ; and this fortunate illness was the cause of bringing back your son to you. Yes, my illness and my imprisonment made nature resume all her rights,

and have entirely weaned me from the court. I have bidden farewell to that tumultuous existence; I wish now for solitude; and I have only come to the Asturias to entreat you to share with me the pleasures of a retired life. If you do not reject my prayer, I will take you to an estate of mine in the kingdom of Valencia, and there we will live together quite comfortably. You may be sure that I intended to take my father thither also; but since Heaven has ordained it otherwise, let me at least enjoy the satisfaction of having my mother in my house, and of making amends, by every attention in my power, for my past neglect."

"I am very much obliged to you for your praiseworthy intentions," said my mother, "and I should accompany you without hesitation, if there were no obstacles in the way. But I will not abandon your uncle, my brother, in his present condition; and I am too much accustomed to this part of the country to leave it; but as the proposal deserves to be maturely considered, I will think about it at my leisure. For the present let us occupy ourselves only about your father's funeral." "We will entrust that," I replied, "to the young man whom you saw with me; he is my secretary, and is intelligent and painstaking; we may with confidence leave it in his hands."

Hardly had I uttered the words when Scipio returned. It was daylight by this time, and

he came to ask us whether he could be of any service in our present trouble. I replied that he had come just in time to receive some important directions which I had to give him. As soon as he knew what was wanted, he said, "That is enough; I have already the whole of the ceremonies arranged in my head; you can leave it to me." "Have a care," said my mother, "not to have too ostentatious a funeral. It cannot be too modest for my husband, whom all the town knows to have been a gentleman in very poor circumstances." "Madam," replied Scipio, "if he had been still poorer than he was, I would not make the expenses two maravedis less. In this matter I can only think of my master who was the favourite of the Duke of Lerma; therefore, his father ought to have a grand funeral."

I approved of my secretary's intention, and even enjoined him not to spare any expense; a remnant of vanity, which I still retained, breaking out on this occasion. I flattered myself that by thus incurring expense for a father who left me no patrimony, I should be admired for my generosity. My mother too, whatever airs of humility she might affect, was not ill-pleased that her husband should be buried with splendour. We accordingly gave full authority to Scipio to do as he liked; and he, without loss of time, took every necessary step to make the funeral resplendent.

He succeeded only too well in this ; for the funeral was so magnificent that it excited the indignation of the town and the suburbs. All the inhabitants of Oviedo, from the highest to the lowest, were shocked at my ostentation, and made very uncomplimentary remarks upon it. "This upstart minister," said one, "is ready enough with his money to bury his father, but he had none to support him when he was alive." "It would have been much better," said another, "to have made his father happy whilst he lived than to do him so much honour after his death." In short, their tongues did not spare me; everyone had his fling. Nor did they stop here; they insulted Scipio, Bertrand, and myself, on our coming out of church; they heaped abuse upon us, hooted us, and threw stones at Bertrand till he reached the inn. In order to disperse the mob which had gathered in front of my uncle's house, my mother was obliged to show herself, and to declare publicly that she was perfectly satisfied with me. Some persons had run to the inn where my carriage was, intending to break it to pieces; and this they would certainly have done if the landlord and his wife had not found some means of appeasing their rage and turning them from their purpose.

All these insults, which were the result of the young grocer's speeches against me in the



city, set me so much against my townsmen that I resolved speedily to leave Oviedo, where I might otherwise have made, perhaps, a pretty long stay. I told this plainly to my mother, who being herself greatly mortified at the reception which the people had given me, did not oppose so sudden a departure. The only question now to be discussed was what I should do for her. "My dear mother," said I, "as my uncle needs your assistance, I will not press you any longer to accompany me; but as he does not seem far from his end, you must promise to come to me as soon as he is no more. I expect this mark of affection from you."

"I shall make no such promise," replied my mother, "for I should not keep it. I want to pass the remainder of my days in the Asturias, and in a state of perfect independence." "Will you not always," I replied, "be absolute mistress in my house?" "I don't know about that," she rejoined. "If you fall in love with some young girl, you will marry her; then she will be my daughter-in-law and I shall be her mother-in-law, and we should not be able to live together." "You see misfortunes which are yet far off," I rejoined. "I have no inclination to marry; but even if the whim should take me, I will pledge myself to make my wife submit implicitly to your wishes." "'That is a rash undertaking,'" replied my



mother; "and I should need a guarantee for such an assurance. I should be afraid that your complaisance to your wife would get the better of your kinship, and I will not swear that in our quarrels you would not rather take your wife's part than mine, however much she might be in the wrong."

"You speak very sensibly, madam," observed my secretary, joining in the conversation, "I agree with you that docile daughters-in-law are very rare. But, to make you and my master at one, since you are fully determined to live in the Asturias, and he in the kingdom of Valencia, he must allow you an annuity of a hundred pistoles, which I shall take to you to Oviedo. By this plan, mother and son will live very happily two hundred leagues apart." The two parties concerned approved of the suggested proposal; after which I paid the first year in advance, and quitted Oviedo next morning before daylight, for fear of being treated like Saint Stephen by the populace.

Such was the reception I received in my native country—an admirable lesson for men of the lower orders who, having grown rich abroad, think of returning to their native place to play the man of importance! The more they display their wealth, the more they will be hated by their fellow-townsmen.

## CHAPTER III.

GIL BLAS SETS OUT FOR VALENCIA AND ARRIVES AT LENGTH AT LIRIAS. THE DESCRIPTION OF HIS SEAT; HOW HE WAS RECEIVED THERE, AND WHAT PERSONS HE FOUND THERE.

WE took the road to Leon, and afterwards that of Palencia; and continuing our journey by short stages, arrived at the end of the tenth day at the town of Segorba; whence, on the following morning, we went on to my estate, which is but three leagues from that town. As we drew near, it was amusing to see my secretary look with much attention at all the mansions which lay on our way, to the right and the left of us. Whenever he beheld one that looked very grand, he never failed to say to me, whilst pointing it out with his finger, "I wish this was our retreat."

"I don't know, friend," I said to him, "what idea you have formed of our dwelling; but if you fancy that ours is a splendid house, and a lordly domain, I warn you that you are terribly mistaken. If you have no mind to be the dupe of your imagination, picture to yourself the little house which Horace possessed in the Sabine district, close by Tibur, which was given him by Mæcenæ. Don Alphonso has made me just such another pre-

sent." "So much the worse," exclaimed Scipio; "then I must expect to see nothing but a cottage." "Not exactly," I replied; "but remember that I always have given you a very modest description of it; and now you may judge for yourself whether I have drawn you a faithful sketch of it. Cast your eyes towards the Guadalaviar, and observe along its banks, near that hamlet, consisting of nine or ten tenements, that house with four small turrets; that is my mansion."

"The deuce!" said my secretary, in a tone of admiration, "that house is a perfect jewel! Not to mention the grand look which the turrets give it, you can see that it is well situated, well built, and surrounded by more charming scenery than even the neighbourhood of Seville, which is called for distinction's sake an earthly paradise.<sup>1</sup> If we had chosen this retreat it could not have been more to my taste; indeed, I think it charming. A stream meanders through the grounds; a dense wood shades us when we care to walk in the middle of the day! What a desirable solitude! Ah, my dear master, we bid fair to live here a long time!" "I am delighted," I answered, "that you are so well satisfied with our retreat; but you do not know all its charms yet."

<sup>1</sup> Lorente says that none but a Spaniard could know the saying: "*Quien no ha visto à Sevilla, no ha visto maravilla*," but it is quoted in Du Val's *La Description et l'Alphabet d'Espagne*, &c., published in Paris in 1669.

Conversing in this manner we drew close to the house, the gate of which was opened to us as soon as Scipio had announced that Señor Gil Blas of Santillana was coming to take possession of his estate. At the mention of this name, an object of respect to all those who heard it, my carriage was admitted into a large court, where I alighted ; then, leaning heavily on Scipio, and affecting an air of importance, I entered a hall where I had no sooner arrived than seven or eight servants made their appearance. They said they had come to offer their homage to their new master ; that Don Cæsar and Don Alphonso de Leyva had selected them to form my establishment, one as a cook, another as cook's assistant, a third as scullion, a fourth as porter, and the rest as footmen ; with the express injunction not to receive any wages from me, as these two noblemen meant to defray all the expenses of my household. The cook, Master Joachim by name, was the principal servant, and spoke for the rest. He made himself very agreeable, and told me that he had laid in a good store of excellent wine of all sorts ; and that, as for good cheer, he hoped that a man like him, who had been for six years cook to the Archbishop of Valencia, should know how to send up dishes which would set my appetite on edge. "I will now," he added, "go and prepare a specimen of my skill. Meanwhile, Señor, take a walk,









while dinner is getting ready ; look about your seat and see whether you think it fit to be inhabited by your lordship.”<sup>1</sup>

I leave the reader to judge whether I omitted to make this inspection ; and Scipio, still more anxious to make it than myself, dragged me from room to room. We went over the whole house, from top to bottom ; not a corner, so we fancied, escaped our selfish curiosity ; and everywhere I had occasion to admire the kindness of Don Cæsar and his son. Among other things I was struck with two apartments which were as elegantly furnished as they could be, without misplaced magnificence. One of them was hung with tapestry of the Low Countries ; the couch and chairs were of velvet, all still handsome, though made when the Moors occupied the kingdom of Valencia. The furniture of the other room was in the same taste ; the hangings were of old yellow Genoa damask, with a couch and arm chairs to match, fringed with blue silk. All these articles, which would hardly have seemed of great value in an inventory, looked here remarkably well.

After a thorough examination of all these things, my secretary and I returned to the dining hall, where the cloth was laid for two. We sat down, and they immediately served us up an *olla podrida* so delicious, that we

<sup>1</sup> *Votre seigneurie* in the original, an example not given in vol. i. INTRODUCTORY NOTICE, pages xxxvii and xxxviii.

pitied the Archbishop of Valencia for no longer possessing the cook who had made it. It is true we had a good appetite, which did not make us think any the worse of it. At every mouthful my new footmen offered us large glasses, filled to the brim with the choicest vintage of La Mancha. Scipio was in raptures, but not daring to express his inward gratification before my retainers, manifested it by expressive looks, while I assured him in the same manner that I was as highly pleased as himself. A dish of two roasted fat quails, flanking a leveret of excellent odour, weaned us from the *olla*, and satisfied our hunger. When we had eaten like two starvelings, and drunk in proportion, we rose from table to go into the garden, to take there a delightful nap in some cool and agreeable spot.

If hitherto my secretary had appeared much pleased with what he had seen, he was still more so when he beheld the garden. He compared it to that of the Escorial; and was never tired of looking at it. The fact is that Don Cæsar, who came occasionally to Lirias, took a pleasure in improving and embellishing it. The well-gravelled walks, bordered with orange-trees; the large white marble basin, in the middle of which a bronze lion spouted forth jets of water; the loveliness of the flowers, the variety of fruits, all these objects ravished Scipio; but he was especially enchanted by a

long alley leading, by a continuous slope, to the farm-house, and shaded by the thick foliage of spreading trees. Here we made a halt, expressing our admiration of a spot so well adapted for shelter against the heat; and we sat down at the foot of an elm, where sleep easily overcame two happy fellows, just risen from a good dinner.

About two hours afterwards, we were started out of our sleep by a report of several blunderbusses which sounded so close to us that we were terrified. Rising hastily, we went to the farm-house to learn the cause of this noise. Here we found eight or ten villagers, all residents in the hamlet, who had assembled to fire their rusty muskets in order to celebrate my arrival, of which they had just been informed. Most of them were acquainted with me, from having seen me more than once at the seat, when I was a steward. As soon as they perceived me, they all shouted in unison: "Long life to our new master! Welcome to Lirias!" Then they again loaded their guns, and treated me to another volley. I received them as courteously as possible, but still in a dignified manner, not thinking it right to be too familiar with them. I assured them of my protection; and moreover, I gave them twenty pistoles, which, in my opinion, was not what pleased them least. After that, I left them at liberty to waste some more powder, and withdrew with

my secretary into the wood, where we walked about until night-fall, without being at all tired of looking at the trees ; so much pleasure does a newly acquired property give in the beginning.

The cook, his assistant, and the scullion had not been idle in the meantime. They were at work preparing for us a better repast than the former one ; and we were greatly astonished when, upon entering the same room where we had dined, we saw served up a dish of four roast partridges, with a jugged rabbit on one side, and a fricasseed capon on the other. Next they gave us, as *entremets*, pigs' ears, pickled chickens, and chocolate-cream. We drank plentifully of Luceno wine,<sup>1</sup> and of several other kinds of delicious vintages ; and when we felt that we could drink no more without endangering our health, we thought of going to bed. Then my servants, taking lighted candles, conducted me to the best apartment, and were most officious in assisting me to undress ; but when they had given me my dressing-gown and night-cap, I dismissed them, saying with an important air, " You may retire, gentlemen ; I shall not need you any more."

I sent them all away, and keeping Scipio, in order to have a little talk with him, we began by congratulating ourselves on our happy condition. It is impossible to express the

<sup>1</sup> See vol. i., INTRODUCTORY NOTICE, p. xxxix.



pleasure which my secretary displayed. "Well, my friend," said I, "what do you think of the way in which I am treated by command of the de Leyvas?" "On my word," he replied, "I think that it could not be better; I only hope that it may last for a long time." "I don't, for my part," I replied; "it does not become me to allow my benefactors to put themselves to so much expense on my account; it would be abusing their generosity. Besides, I could never get on with servants paid by other people; I should not fancy I was in my own house. Moreover, I did not come here to live on such an expensive scale. What folly! Do we need so many servants? No: we only want, besides Bertrand, a cook, a scullion, and a footman; that will be enough for us." Though my secretary would not have been sorry to live for ever at the Governor of Valencia's expense, he did not combat my scruples on this point but conformed to my sentiments, and approved of the reduction I was meditating to introduce. This being decided, he left my room, and retired to his own.

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## CHAPTER IV.

GIL BLAS GOES TO VALENCIA, TO VISIT DON CÆSAR AND DON ALPHONSO DE LEYVA. HIS CONVERSATION WITH THEM, AND THE KIND RECEPTION WHICH SERAPHINA GAVE HIM.

I UNDRESSED myself, and went to bed, where, feeling no inclination to sleep, I gave myself up to my reflections. I mused on the friendship wherewith the de Leyvas repaid my attachment to them; and touched by the fresh proofs of kindness which they had been giving me, I resolved to go to them on the very next day, to satisfy the impatience I felt in thanking them. I also anticipated the pleasure of seeing Seraphina again; but that pleasure was not unalloyed. I could not think without pain that I should at the same time have to endure the looks of Dame Lorenza Sephora, who, probably still remembered the adventure of a certain box on the ear, and would not be too glad to see me again. My mind being exhausted by these various suggestions I finally fell asleep, and did not wake next day until after sunrise.

I was soon out of bed; and full of the journey which I meditated, I dressed myself with all possible expedition. As I was finishing, my secretary came into the room.

“Scipio,” I said to him, “you behold a man on the point of setting out for Valencia. I do not think you will disapprove of my intention. I ought to lose no time in paying my respects to the noblemen to whom I owe my little independence; every moment of delay in the performance of this duty seems to accuse me of ingratitude. As for you, my friend, I can dispense with your company; stay here whilst I am away; I shall return within eight days.” “Go, sir,” he replied, “pay your court to Don Alphonso and his father. They seem to me to feel deeply any affection displayed for them, and to be very grateful for any services which are rendered them. Gentlemen of rank of such a character are so rare, that they cannot be made too much of.” I sent word to Bertrand to hold himself in readiness to start; and whilst he was harnessing the mules, I took my chocolate. Then I got into my carriage, after bidding my attendants to look upon Scipio as myself, and to obey his orders as though they were mine.

I reached Valencia in less than four hours, and drove at once to the governor’s stables, where I left my carriage, and got some one to show me his lordship’s room, where also his father, Don Cæsar, happened to be. Opening the door I entered without ceremony, and addressing them both respectfully, I said—Servants never send in their names to their

masters; here is one of your old attendants come to pay you his respects." With these words I was about to throw myself on my knees, but they both anticipated my purpose, and embraced me with all the signs of genuine affection. "Well, my dear Santillana," said Don Alphonso, "have you been to Lirias to take possession of your estate?" "Yes, Señor," I answered, "and I beg you will permit me to return it to you." "What do you mean by that?" he replied; "is there anything unpleasant about it which offends your taste?" "Not in the estate itself," I rejoined; "on the contrary I am delighted with it; but what displeases me, is to find there the cooks of an archbishop, with three times as many servants as I need, and these put you to an expense as extravagant as it is useless."

"Had you accepted the annuity of two thousand ducats which we offered you at Madrid," said Don Cæsar, "we should have been satisfied with giving you the seat, such as it is; but you know that you refused it, and we felt it but right to do what we have done, to make up for it." "It is too much," I answered; "your kindness will have to be limited to the gift of the estate, which is more than sufficient to satisfy my desires. Shall I tell you all my inmost thoughts? To say nothing of what it costs you to support so many people, I declare to you that these

gentry annoy and inconvenience me. In a word, my lords," I added, "either take back your gift, or give me leave to enjoy it in my own way." I uttered these last words with such a determined air, that father and son, who had no notion of constraining me, at length gave me their permission to do as I pleased in my own house.

I was thanking them for having granted me this privilege, without which I could not have been happy, when Don Alphonso interrupted me, saying, "My dear Gil Blas, I want to present you to a lady who will be very glad to see you." With these words he took me by the hand, and led me to Seraphina's apartment, who uttered an exclamation of pleasure on seeing me. "Madam," said the governor, "I flatter myself that the visit of our friend Santillana to Valencia is no less agreeable to you than to me." "He may rest assured of that," she replied; "time has not made me forget the service he has rendered me; and besides the gratitude I owe him, he has laid me anew under obligation for his kindness to you." I replied to the governor's lady that I was already too well repaid for the peril which I had shared with her deliverers, by exposing my life for her sake; and after many compliments on both sides, Don Alphonso and I left Seraphina's room. We rejoined Don Cæsar, whom we found in another



apartment with several people of rank who had come to dinner.

All these gentlemen treated me very politely, and paid me all the more attention, because Don Cæsar had told them that I had been one of the Duke of Lerma's principal secretaries. Perhaps, moreover, most of them were aware that it was by my influence Don Alphonso had obtained the governorship of Valencia; for everything gets known. However that might be, when we were at table nothing was spoken of but the new Cardinal.<sup>1</sup> Some of the company bestowed, or affected to bestow, great eulogy upon him, while others only praised him sarcastically. From that I concluded that they wanted me to enlarge on the subject of his Eminence, and to amuse them at his expense. At all events that is what I fancied, and I was not a little tempted to say what I thought of him; but I held my tongue, and this little victory, which I won over myself, made me appear a very judicious man to the company.

After dinner the guests withdrew for their siesta, whilst Don Cæsar and his son retired to their own rooms, yielding to a similar inclination.

As for me, full of impatience to see a town whose beauty I had often heard praised, I left the governor's palace, intending to walk about

<sup>1</sup> See bk. viii., chap. v., p. 33, note 1.

the streets. At the door I met a man who respectfully approached me and said—"Will Señor de Santillana permit me to pay my respects to him?" I asked him who he was. "I am Don Cæsar's valet," he answered; "I was one of his footmen when you were his steward, and used to attend upon you every morning. You were very kind to me, and I regularly gave you information of everything that went on in the house. For instance, do you remember that one day I told you that the village surgeon at Leyva was privately admitted into Dame Lorenza Sephora's room?" "I have not forgotten it," I replied. "But, talking of that duenna, what has become of her?" "Alas!" he rejoined, "the poor creature wasted away after your departure, and died more regretted by Seraphina than by Don Alphonso, who did not seem to be much affected at her death."

Don Cæsar's valet, having thus related the sad end of Sephora, made an apology for detaining me, and I continued my walk. I could not help sighing as I recalled the unfortunate duenna; and lamenting her fate, I attributed her misfortune to myself, not reflecting that it was rather to her cancer than to my merits that I ought to have ascribed it.

I looked with pleasure upon everything that seemed worth noticing in the town. The archbishop's marble palace was a pleasing sight,

and so were the fine porticoes of the Exchange ; but a large building which I perceived, and where many persons were going in, attracted entirely my attention. I drew nearer to learn why such a large crowd of men and women was collected, and was soon let into the secret, by reading the following inscription in gilt letters on a black marble tablet over the door : —*La posada de los Representantes*.<sup>1</sup> The play-bills announced that that day a new tragedy by Don Gabriel Triaquero<sup>2</sup> was about to be performed for the first time.

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## CHAPTER V.

GIL BLAS GOES TO THE PLAY, AND SEES A NEW TRAGEDY. THE SUCCESS OF THE PIECE. THE PUBLIC TASTE IN VALENCIA.

I STOOD for some moments at the door to look at the persons who were going in, and saw some of all kinds. I observed gentlemen of good appearance and dressed in costly apparel, and creatures as ill-favoured as they were shabby. I perceived titled ladies, alighting from their

<sup>1</sup> See vol. i., INTRODUCTORY NOTICE, p. xxxii.

<sup>2</sup> By Triaquero, a vendor of theriaca, it is said that Lesage meant Voltaire. See vol. i., INTRODUCTORY NOTICE, p. ix.

carriages, and proceeding to the private boxes which had been engaged for them, and adventuresses who went to fish for dupes. This mixed concourse of spectators of all kinds gave me a desire to increase their number. Just as I was taking my ticket, the governor and his lady arrived, spied me out in the crowd and sent for me; they then took me into their box, where I placed myself behind them, so that I could easily converse with either.

The theatre was crowded from top to bottom; the pit was full, and even the stage was occupied by knights of the three military orders. "This is a full house,," I said to Don Alphonso. "That need not astonish you," he replied, "the tragedy they are about to produce is by Don Gabriel Triaquero, surnamed the fashionable poet. Whenever the playbill announces a new piece by this author, the whole town of Valencia is on tiptoe. The men as well as the women talk of nothing but the play; all the boxes are taken; and on the first night of the performance, the people crush each other to death at the doors to get in, although the price of admission is doubled, except in the pit, which the actors dare not venture to irritate." "What excitement!" I said to the governor. "This eager curiosity of the public, this mad impatience to hear every new production of Don Gabriel, gives me a high notion of the genius of that poet." "Not so fast," replied Don



Alphonso, "we must take care not to draw rapid conclusions; the public is sometimes blind in regard to pieces full of bathos, and knows only their real value after they have been printed."

At this point of our conversation the curtain rose. We at once ceased talking, to fix our whole attention on the stage. The applause began with the prologue. At every line there was an outbreak, and at the end of each act there was such a clapping of hands as to make one almost believe that the building was going to tumble about our ears. After the performance the author was pointed out to me, going about from box to box,<sup>1</sup> modestly offering his head for the laurels with which the ladies and gentlemen had prepared to crown him.

We returned to the governor's palace, where presently three or four gentlemen arrived. Besides these, there came also two veteran authors, highly valued in their special lines, with a gentleman from Madrid who was intelligent, and possessed some taste. They had all been at the theatre; and during supper nothing was talked of but the new piece. "Gentle-

<sup>1</sup> In confirmation of the suggestion that by Triaquero Lesage meant to have a hit at Voltaire, see G. Desnoiresterres, *La Jeunesse de Voltaire*, Paris, 1871, ch. xii. After the first representation of *Zaire*, about three years before the last volume of *Gil Blas* made its appearance, Voltaire wrote to his friend Cideville—"Je parus dans une loge et tout le parterre me battit des mains." Perhaps Lesage was present at this ovation.



men," said a knight of Saint Iago, "what do you think of this tragedy? Has it not produced the same impression on your mind as on mine, and, is it not, what you call, a finished work, in which sublime thoughts, tender sentiments and manly versification are to be found? In a word, it is a performance written for people of refinement." "I imagine no one can think otherwise," said a knight of Alcantara. "The piece is full of passages which Apollo might have dictated, and of situations arranged with infinite art. I appeal to this gentleman," he added, addressing the Castilian, "he looks to me like a critic, and I will wager that he is of my mind." "Don't lay a wager, knight," replied the gentleman, with an arch smile, "I don't belong to this part of the kingdom. At Madrid we do not decide so quickly. Instead of judging a piece which we have heard for the first time, we mistrust its beauties so long as it is only in the actors' mouths. However well we may be disposed towards it, we suspend our judgment until we have read it; and truly it does not always give us the same pleasure on paper which it has given us on the stage. Thus," he continued, "we carefully examine a poem before judging of its worth; the reputation of its author, however great it may be, cannot dazzle us. When Lope de Vega himself and Calderon<sup>1</sup> produced

<sup>1</sup> It is said that in mentioning the two Spanish dramatists, Lope de Vega and Calderon de la Barca, Lesage intended to speak of Corneille and Racine whom he places above Voltaire.

new plays, they found in their admirers severe critics, who only raised them to the pinnacle of glory after having ascertained that they were worthy of it."

"Oh!" broke in the knight of Saint Iago, "we are not quite so cautious as the worthy Castilians. We do not wait to decide until a piece has been printed, but recognise its value from the very first performance, we do not even require to listen to it very attentively. It is enough for us to know that it is a production of Don Gabriel's, to be persuaded that it is faultless. The works of that poet mark the era of the introduction of good taste. Your Lopes and Calderons were but prentice hands, compared to this great master of the drama." The Castilian, who regarded Lope and Calderon as the Sophocles and the Euripides of Spain was shocked by this bold speech. He grew warm, and exclaimed in an animated tone. "What dramatic sacrilege! "Since you compel me, gentlemen, to criticise a first performance, I must tell you that I am not at all pleased with the new tragedy of your Don Gabriel. Far from thinking it a masterpiece, I consider it very defective. It is a poem crammed with brilliant rather than solid passages. Three fourths of the verses are bad or defective in rhyme, the characters are badly conceived or feebly sustained, and the sentiments often very obscure."

The two authors who were at the table, and who, with a self-restraint as praiseworthy as it is rare, had said nothing, lest they should be suspected of jealousy, could not resist showing by their looks that they approved the speaker's sentiments, which led me to attribute their silence less to the perfection of the work than to their tact. As for the knights, they began again to praise Don Gabriel, ranking him even with the gods. This extravagant apotheosis and blind idolatry made the Castilian lose patience, and lifting up his hands to Heaven, he suddenly cried out, as though in a fit of enthusiasm. "Oh! divine Lope de Vega! rare and sublime genius, who has left an immeasurable space between you and all the Gabriels who would attempt to approach you; and you, mellifluous Calderon, whose sweetness, elegance, and freedom from rant are past all imitation, do not fear that your altars will be overthrown by this new suckling of the Muses! Happy will he be, if posterity, whom you will delight as you have delighted us, so much as hears of his name!"

This amusing apostrophe, which no one had expected, made the whole company laugh, and they rose from table in high good humour, and departed. Don Alphonso took me to a room which had been got ready for me, where I found a good bed, in which my lordship<sup>1</sup> went

<sup>1</sup> See vol. i., INTRODUCTORY NOTICE, p. xxxvii., 8°.

to sleep, deploring, as the Castilian gentleman had done, the unjust criticisms of ignorant men on Lope and Calderon.

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## CHAPTER VI.

GIL BLAS, WALKING IN THE STREETS OF VALENCIA,  
MEETS A MONK WHOM HE SEEMS TO RE-  
COGNISE. WHO THIS MONK WAS.

As I had not been able to see the whole town on the preceding day, I went out next morning, as soon as I had got up, intending to take another walk. In the street I met a Carthusian friar, who was, I supposed, going about, attending to the affairs of his community. He walked with his eyes on the ground, and with so devout an air that he attracted every one's notice. He passed close by me, and I fancied that I recognised Don Raphael, the adventurer who has already secured such an honourable place in the first half of my history.<sup>1</sup>

I was so astonished by this meeting that, instead of accosting the monk, I remained motionless for a few moments, which give him time to get out of my sight. "Good Heaven!"

<sup>1</sup> See vol. i. bk. i., ch. xv. and xvi. ; bk. ii. ch. iv. and v. ; and vol. ii., bk. iv., ch. xi. ; bk. v., ch. i. and ii., and bk. vi., ch. i. and ii.



I said to myself, "were there ever two faces so much alike? What am I to think of it? Am I to believe that it is Don Raphael, or am I to imagine that it is not he?" I felt too anxious to get at the truth to be satisfied with what I had seen. I enquired the way to the Carthusian monastery, and instantly betook myself thither, hoping to see the object of my search on his return, and quite resolved to stop him and speak to him there and then. I had not to wait long to learn the truth, for when I reached the convent gate, another face that I knew turned my doubt into certainty; and I recognised in the door-keeper, Ambrose de Lamela, my old servant. You may imagine how astonished I was.

Our surprise at meeting each other again in such a place was equal. "Is this not an illusion?" I said as I bowed to him. "Is it really one of my friends who presents himself to my sight?" He did not recognise me at first, or what is more likely, pretended not to remember me, but thinking it useless to deny his identity, he assumed the air of a man who suddenly recollects a thing he had forgotten. "Ah! Señor Gil Blas," he exclaimed, "excuse my not recognising you immediately. Since I have been living in this holy place, and have devoted myself to discharging the duties prescribed by our rules, I gradually lose the remembrance of what I have seen in the world;



the impress of what has been going on this century is effaced from my recollection."

"After a separation of ten years, I am sincerely rejoiced to see you again, in so respectable a garb," I said. "And I," he replied, "am ashamed to appear in it before a man who has witnessed the culpable life which I have been leading. This garb continually reproaches me with my guilt. Alas!" he added, sighing, "to be worthy of wearing it, I ought always to have lived innocently." "These words, which charm me," I replied, "plainly show, my dear brother, that the hand of Heaven has been upon you. I tell you once again, I am delighted, and am very anxious to know in what miraculous manner you and Don Raphael were led into the right path; for I am convinced it was he I met just now in the town, in a Carthusian's dress. I was sorry not to have stopped him in the street and spoken to him; and I came here to wait for his return, in order to repair my omission."

"You were not mistaken," said Lamela; "it was Don Raphael himself whom you saw; and as for the information you ask, I will give it you. After we had parted from you near Segorba, he and I took the road to Valencia, intending to perform some fresh roguery in that city. Chance led us one day to enter the church of the Carthusians, whilst the holy

men were singing psalms in the choir. We began to look at them attentively; and we felt that wicked men cannot avoid involuntarily paying homage to virtue. We admired the fervour with which they prayed to God; their looks of mortification which showed them to be weaned from temporal pleasures; as well as the serenity which prevailed on their countenances, and which so plainly expressed the peace of their consciences."

"While making these observations we both fell into a train of thought which had a most salutary effect upon us: we contrasted our habits of life with those of these good brethren, and the difference between theirs and ours filled us with trouble and anxiety. 'Lamela,' said Don Raphael to me, when we were outside the church; 'are you moved by what we have just seen? For my part, there is no disguising the fact, my mind is not at ease. I feel within me emotions hitherto unknown, and for the first time in my life I reproach myself for my wicked actions.' 'I am in the same mood,' I replied, 'the evil deeds that I have done rise up against me at this very moment; and my heart is torn by remorse, which it has never felt before.' 'Ah! my dear Ambrose,' rejoined my comrade, 'we are two lost sheep whom our heavenly Father, in His mercy, intends to bring back to the fold. It is He, my dear fellow, He who calls to us. Let us not be deaf to His

voice ; let us renounce our knavish tricks, let us give up the licence in which we are living, and begin, from this very day, to labour seriously at the great work of our salvation. We had better spend the remainder of our days in this convent, and devote them to repentance.'

" I approved of Raphael's idea," continued brother Ambrose : " and we formed the noble resolution of becoming Carthusians. In order to carry it out, we addressed ourselves to the father prior, who was no sooner made acquainted with our design than, in order to test our vocation, he had two cells set apart for us, and submitted us to the same discipline as the monks, for a whole year. We observed the rules with such regularity and constancy, that we were admitted amongst the novices ; we were so satisfied with our condition, and so full of ardour, that we bravely underwent the labours of the noviciate. Then we took the habit of the order, after which Don Raphael, who appeared to be endowed with a talent for business, was chosen to assist an old friar who was at that time our agent. Lucinda's son, who longed only for inward self-communing, would have preferred to spend his whole time in prayer ; but he was obliged to sacrifice his inclination to the need the brethren had of him. He acquired such a thorough knowledge of the affairs of the convent, that he was appointed to the place of the old agent, who died three

years afterwards. Don Raphael now discharges this office; and it may be said that he acquits himself of his duty to the entire satisfaction of all our fathers, who greatly praise his conduct in the administration of our temporalities. The most surprising thing is, that, notwithstanding the labour entrusted to him of collecting our revenues, he only appears to be engrossed by thoughts of eternity. If his business leaves him a moment's leisure, he is plunged in the most profound meditations. In a word, he is one of the most exemplary members of this monastery."

At this point I interrupted Lamela by an outburst of pleasure, on seeing Raphael approach. "Here he is," I exclaimed, "here is this holy agent whom I have been awaiting with such impatience!" At the same time I ran to meet him, and clasped him in my arms for some moments. He submitted to my embrace with a good grace; and without displaying the least astonishment at meeting me again, he said, in a tone full of sweetness—"Heaven be praised, Señor de Santillana, Heaven be praised for the pleasure that I experience in seeing you once more!" "Of a truth, my dear Raphael," I replied, "I share your happiness to the full; brother Ambrose has told me the story of your conversion, and his account has delighted me. What an advantage for you both, my friends, to be able to



flatter yourselves with being among the small number of elect who are to enjoy everlasting happiness ! ”

“ Two such wretches as we are,” replied Lucinda’s son, in a manner which bore witness to his deep humility, “ ought not to entertain such an expectation ; but the repentance of sinners enables them to find favour with the Father of mercy. And you, Señor Gil Blas,” he added, “ do not you also think of endeavouring to deserve pardon for your transgressions against Him ? What business brings you to Valencia ? Are you so unfortunate as to hold some post in this town which is fraught with danger ? ”

“ No, thank Heaven,” I replied, “ since I left the Court I have led the life of an honest man. Sometimes I enjoy all the pleasures of the country on an estate of mine, a few leagues from this town ; and sometimes I come hither to amuse myself with my friend, the governor of Valencia, whom you both know perfectly well.”

I then related to them the story of Don Alphonso de Leyva. They listened to it attentively ; and on my telling them that, in his lordship’s name, I had given back to Samuel Simon the three thousand ducats which we had robbed him of, Lamela interrupted me, and addressing Raphael, said—“ Father Hilary, at that rate the worthy tradesman has no reason to complain of a theft which has been made up to him with heavy interest, and our



consciences may be quite at ease in this respect." "The fact is," said the holy agent, "brother Ambrose and I, before we entered this monastery, privately sent fifteen hundred ducats to Samuel Simon by a worthy ecclesiastic, who was good enough to take the trouble of going to Xelva to make this restitution. So much the worse for Samuel, if he was capable of accepting this sum after having been reimbursed in full by Señor de Santillana." "But," I said to them, "were your fifteen hundred ducats faithfully conveyed to him?" "Undoubtedly they were," exclaimed Don Raphael, "I will answer for the integrity of the ecclesiastic as for my own." "I too will go bail for him," said Lamela; "he is a priest of great sanctity, accustomed to similar commissions, and though two or three lawsuits have been brought against him about certain sums deposited with him, he has always gained them with costs." "In that case," I replied, "it cannot be doubted that the restitution was made with scrupulous fidelity."

Our conversation lasted some time longer; then we separated, they exhorting me always to have the fear of the Lord before my eyes, and I commending myself to their earnest prayers. I went straight to Don Alphonso. "You would never guess," I said, "with whom I have just been having a long talk. I have this instant left two venerable Carthusian monks of your

acquaintance; one is named Father Hilary, and the other brother Ambrose." "You are under a mistake," replied Don Alphonso, "I am not acquainted with a single Carthusian." "Pardon me," I replied, "you have seen at Xelva brother Ambrose as commissioner of the Inquisition, and Father Hilary as his secretary." "Heavens!" exclaimed the governor in astonishment, "can it be possible for Raphael and Lamela to have turned Carthusians?" "That they have," I replied; "they took the habit of that order several years ago. The first is agent and the second door-keeper of the convent; the former is master of the strong-box, and the latter of the door."

The son of Don Cæsar mused for some moments, and then, shaking his head, said—"It looks very much as though the worthy commissioner of the Inquisition and his secretary are about to play a new trick." "That may be," I replied, "but, for my own part, I confess that I, who have spoken to them, have a better opinion of them. To be sure, we cannot fathom the bottom of other men's hearts, but to all appearance these rogues are truly converted." "It possibly may be so," rejoined Don Alphonso; "there are plenty of rakes who, after scandalising the world by their irregularities, shut themselves up in convents in order to expatiate

their sins by a rigorous penitence. I hope our two monks may be of the number."

"And why should they not?" said I. "They have voluntarily embraced a monastic life, and have been already living a long time as good monks." "You may say whatever you like," replied the governor; "but I do not relish the idea that the strong-box of the convent should be in the hands of this Father Hilary, whom I cannot help distrusting. When I remember that fine story he told us of his adventures, I tremble for the Carthusians. I am willing to believe with you that he assumed the monastic garb with the best intentions; but the sight of gold may rouse his cupidity. You should not put a reformed drunkard in a wine-cellar."

Don Alphonso's misgivings were fully justified. In the course of a few days, the clerical agent and the brother-door-keeper disappeared with the strong-box. This news, which instantly spread through the town, did not fail to entertain the wits, who always make merry at the misfortunes of well-endowed monkish orders. As for the governor and myself, we pitied the Carthusians, without boasting of our acquaintance with the two apostates.

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## CHAPTER VII.

GIL BLAS RETURNS TO HIS SEAT AT LIRIAS. THE PLEASANT NEWS WHICH SCIPIO GAVE HIM, AND THE REFORM WHICH THEY MADE IN THEIR DOMESTIC ARRANGEMENTS.

I SPENT eight days at Valencia in the best society, living like a count or a marquis. Plays, balls, concerts, entertainments, ladies' parties, all these diversions were provided for me by the governor and his lady, to whom I paid my court so well that they were sorry when I left them to return to Lirias. They even compelled me, before they would let me go, to promise them, to divide my time between them and my retreat. It was settled that I should spend the winter in Valencia, and the summer at my seat. After this was agreed upon, my benefactors left me at liberty to enjoy their favours elsewhere ; and I therefore returned to Lirias, well pleased with my journey.

Scipio, who was impatiently awaiting my return, was overjoyed at seeing me again, and I increased his delight by a faithful account of all that had taken place. "And you, friend," I asked, "how have you passed the time of my absence? Have you had plenty of amusements?" "As much as a servant can

have," he replied, "to whom nothing is so dear as the presence of his master. I have walked over the whole of our little territory; now seated by the brink of a fountain in the woods, I have taken pleasure in contemplating the beauty of its waters, which are as pellucid as those of the sacred spring whose tinkling resounds through the vast forest of Albunea<sup>1</sup>; and now, lying at the foot of a tree, I have listened to the song of the linnets and the nightingales. In short, I have hunted, I have fished, and, what has pleased me even more than all these amusements, I have read several books, as instructive as they are diverting."

I hastily interrupted my secretary, to ask him where he got these books. "I found them," he said, "in a fine library here in the house, which Master Joachim has shown me." "Wherever can this said library be?" I rejoined. "Did we not go over the whole house on the day of our arrival?" "You fancied so," he replied; "but you must know that we only went over three wings, and forgot the fourth. It was there that Don Cæsar, when he came to Lirias, used to spend part of his time in reading. There are some very good books in this library, which have been left to you as a never-failing resource against weariness, when our gardens, stripped of their flowers, and our woods of their leaves, can no

<sup>1</sup> See the seventh Ode of Horace to Munatius Plancus, bk. i.



longer afford you amusement. The lords of Leyva have not done things by halves, but have thought of food for the mind as well as for the body."

This intelligence filled me with sincere joy. I went to the fourth wing, and a very pleasant spectacle met my sight. I saw a chamber which I instantly resolved to make my own room, as Don Cæsar had made it his. That nobleman's bed was still there, with the rest of the furniture, comprising curtains representing the rape of the Sabine women by the Romans. From this chamber I passed into a study, fitted up all round with low bookcases filled with books, and over them the portraits of all our kings. Near a window commanding a most cheerful prospect, was an ebony writing-table, before a large sofa covered with black morocco. But I gave my attention principally to the library. It was composed of works of philosophy, poetry, and history ; and of a large number of romances of chivalry. I concluded that Don Cæsar was fond of the last, since he had made such a good collection of them. I must confess to my shame that I, too, did not dislike these productions, notwithstanding all the extravagances with which they abound, whether it was owing to my not being a very critical reader at that time, or whether the marvellous renders Spaniards too lenient. Nevertheless, I must plead in my own justifi-

cation that I took more pleasure in books at once ethical and sprightly, and that Lucianus, Horace, and Erasmus became my favourite authors.

“My friend,” I said to Scipio, when I had glanced over my library, “here is entertainment for us; but there is one thing we have to do before anything else; we must reform our domestic arrangements.” “That is a trouble,” he observed, “which I mean to spare you. During your absence I have carefully observed the servants, and I may flatter myself that I know them. To begin with Master Joachim: I believe him to be a regular rogue, and I have no doubt he was dismissed from the Archbishop’s service for some arithmetical blunders in his accounts. Yet we must keep him for two reasons; first, because he is a good cook, and secondly because I shall always have my eye on him and watch his actions; he must be very clever indeed to deceive me. I told him yesterday that you meant to discharge three-fourths of your servants, and I observed that this news gave him some pain. Indeed he assured me that, being very anxious to serve you, he would be content with half his present wages rather than leave you; which makes me suspect that there is some young girl in this hamlet whom he does not want to quit. As for the cook’s assistant,” he continued, “he is a drunkard, and the porter is a clown, of

whom we have no need, any more than of the gamekeeper. I shall easily fill the place of the latter, as you may see to-morrow; for we are provided with guns, powder and shot. As for the footmen there is one, a native of Aragon, who seems to me to be a good sort of fellow, and we shall keep him; but all the rest are such rascals that I would not advise you to retain one of them, even if you wanted a hundred."

After having fully considered the point, we made up our minds to keep the cook, the scullion, and the footman from Aragon, and to get rid of the rest as decently as we could; which was carried out on the very same day, with the aid of a few pistoles which Scipio took from our strong box, and distributed among them in my name. When we had carried this reform into effect, we put things in the house in regular order; we settled the duties of each servant, and began to live at our own cost. I should willingly have been satisfied with a frugal table; but my secretary, who liked fricassees and tit-bits, was not the man to let Master Joachim's abilities grow rusty. He managed so well that our dinners and suppers resembled the meals of Bernardine monks.

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## CHAPTER VIII.

THE LOVES OF GIL BLAS AND THE FAIR  
ANTONIA.

Two days after my return from Valencia to Lirias, Basil, my farmer, came to me early in the morning to ask permission to present to me his daughter, Antonia, who was very desirous, as he said, to have the honour of paying her respects to her new master. I told him it would give me great pleasure. He went out, and in a few minutes returned with his fair Antonia. I think I may give this epithet to a girl from sixteen to eighteen years of age, who united to regular features the finest complexion and the brightest eyes in the world. She was simply dressed in a stuff gown; but a tall figure, a dignified carriage, and such graces as do not always accompany youth, relieved the simplicity of her attire. She had no head-dress; and her hair was merely tied up behind with a knot of flowers, in the fashion of the Lacedemonian women.

When I saw her entering my room, I was as much smitten by her beauty as the paladins of Charlemagne's court were by the personal charms of Angelica, when that Princess appeared before them. Instead of receiving Antonia with an



easy air, and saying a few flattering things to her; instead of congratulating her father on the happiness of possessing such a charming daughter, I was astonished, confounded, struck dumb; I could not utter a single word. Scipio, who perceived my emotion, took the words out of my mouth, and discharged the debt of praise which I owed to this lovely creature. As for her, not being dazzled by my appearing in a dressing-gown and nightcap, she accosted me with no sign of embarrassment, and paid me a compliment which, though very commonplace, completed my rapture. Meanwhile, my secretary, Basil, and his daughter were exchanging civilities till I recovered myself; and, as though to make up for the stupid silence which I had hitherto maintained, I went from one extreme to another. I was diffuse in gallant speeches, and talked with so much vivacity as to alarm Basil, who, looking on me already as a man who would go to any length to seduce Antonia, hurriedly left my room with her, probably resolving to remove her from my sight for ever.

When we were alone, Scipio said with a smile—"Señor de Santillana, here is another resource against weariness! I did not know that your farmer had such a pretty daughter; I never saw her before, though I have been twice at his house. He must take great care to keep her out of the way; and I can forgive







him for it. On my word she is a delicate morsel! But," he added, "I don't think I need tell you that; I could see that she amazed you from the first." "I do not deny it," I replied. "Ah, my dear fellow, I think her a heavenly creature; she kindled my passion then and there; lightning is not so swift as the arrow she has pierced me with."

"You delight me," returned my secretary, joyfully, "by giving me to understand that at last you have fallen in love. Nothing but a mistress was wanting, to make you enjoy perfect happiness in your solitude. Thank Heaven, you are now likely to get all you require! I know well enough," he continued, "that we shall have some trouble in eluding the vigilance of Basil, but that is my concern; and before three days are past I will contrive to procure you a secret interview with Antonia." "Master Scipio," I said to him, "it is not so sure that you might be able to keep your promise, whatever skill you may display in love-intrigues; but I am not curious of bringing it to the test. I will not tempt the virtue of this girl, who seems to deserve that I should entertain other sentiments for her. Therefore, instead of requiring your aid in dishonouring her, I have made up my mind to marry her, with your assistance, provided her heart is not pre-occupied by another." "I did not expect," said he, "to see you so suddenly resolve to

marry. Most landed proprietors, in your place, would not behave so honourably ; they would only entertain legitimate views for Antonia, after having tried others in vain. However," he continued, "do not imagine that I condemn your love. On the contrary, I strongly approve it. Your farmer's daughter deserves the honour you intend for her, if she can offer you a virgin heart, and one sensible of your kindness. This," he added, "is what I shall find out to-day in conversation with her father, and perhaps with her."

My confidant was a punctual man in keeping his promises. He went to see Basil privately, and in the evening came to me in my room, where I awaited his return with somewhat of impatience and apprehension. He had a cheerful look, from which I drew a good omen. "If I may trust your smiling countenance," I said, "you have come to tell me that I shall soon be at the height of my desires." "Yes, my dear master," he replied, "everything is going on favourably. I have conversed with Basil and his daughter, and told them your intentions. The father is delighted that you wish to be his son-in-law ; and I can assure you that Antonia is pleased with you." "Oh ! Heaven !" I broke in with a transport of joy, "am I so happy as to please that lovely creature !" "No doubt about it," he replied ; "she already loves you. It is true, I have not obtained that con-

fession from her own mouth, but my assurance rests on the pleasure which she showed on hearing your intentions. And yet you have a rival," he continued. "A rival!" I said, growing pale. "That ought not to alarm you," he replied; "this rival will not win your mistress's heart; it is Master Joachim, your cook." "Ah! the hangdog!" I exclaimed, with a hearty laugh; "this, then, is the reason why he showed such a reluctance to leave my service!" "Just so," answered Scipio. "Within these few days he made proposals of marriage to Antonia, and was politely refused." "With submission to your better judgment," I resumed, "it strikes me that it would be as well to get rid of that rascal before he learns that I wish to marry Basil's daughter. A cook, you know, is a dangerous rival." "You are right," rejoined my confidant; "we must be cautious, and clear the premises of him; he shall be discharged to-morrow morning before he sets to work, and you will have nothing more to fear, either from his sauces or from his love. Nevertheless," he continued, "I am rather sorry to lose such a good cook; but I sacrifice my fondness of good living to your safety." "You need not regret him so much," I said; "his loss is not irreparable; and I will send to Valencia for a cook as good as he was." Accordingly I wrote at once to Don Alphonso, to let him know that I wanted a cook; and on the



following day he sent me one who consoled Scipio from his very first trial.

Though my active secretary had assured me that he had perceived Antonia's inward self-congratulation at having made the conquest of her landlord, I dared not rely on his information. I was afraid he had been deceived by false appearances. To make certain whether he had or not, I resolved to speak to the lovely Antonia myself. With this intention I went to Basil's house, to whom I communicated what my ambassador had told me. This honest farmer, a simple and very candid man, after having heard what I had to say, declared that he would be delighted to give me his daughter. "But," he added, "you are by no means to suppose that it is on account of your being lord of the manor: if you were still merely Don Cæsar and Don Alphonso's steward, I should prefer you to any other suitor who might offer himself. I have always liked you, and what vexes me is that Antonia cannot bring you a large dowry." "I ask none with her," I said; "she herself is the only wealth to which I aspire." "Your most humble servant," he exclaimed; "but that would not suit me. I am not a beggar to marry my daughter in that manner. Basil of Buenotrigo<sup>1</sup> is in a position, thank Heaven, to give her a dowry; and I mean her to bring you your supper, if you give her her dinner. In

<sup>1</sup> *Buenotrigo* is the Spanish for "good wheat."

a word, the rental of this farm is only five hundred ducats; I will make it a thousand, on the strength of this marriage."

"You can do whatever you like, my dear Basil," I replied; "we will have no dispute about money-matters. We are both agreed; all that remains now to be done, is to get your daughter's consent." "You have mine," he said; "is not that enough for you?" "Not quite," I replied. "If yours be necessary, so also is hers." "Hers depends on mine," he replied, "I should like to catch her murmuring before me!" "Antonia, being submissive to paternal authority, is doubtless ready to obey you implicitly," I answered; "but I am not sure whether in the present instance she would do it without reluctance; and, if that be the case, I could never console myself for having made her unhappy. In short, it is not enough for me to obtain her hand from you; she also must consent to the gift, which you bestow on me!" "Oh," said Basil, "I don't understand all this philosophy. Speak to Antonia yourself, and, unless I am much mistaken, you will find that she desires nothing better than to be your wife." After having said this, he called his daughter, and left me alone with her for a moment.

To make the best use of such precious time, I entered on the subject at once. "Lovely Antonia," I said, "decide my fate. Though I

have your father's consent, do not suppose that I would presume upon it to do violence to your feelings. However delightful it may be to call you my own, I abandon my pretensions if you but tell me that you give your consent merely in obedience to your father's commands." "That is what I have no wish to tell you," replied Antonia, blushing slightly; "your addresses are too flattering to cause me any pain, and I approve my father's choice, rather than complain of it. I do not know," she continued, "whether I am right or wrong in speaking thus to you; but if you displeased me I should be candid enough to tell you so; why then should I not be equally free in telling you the contrary?"

At these words, which I could not hear without rapture, I dropped on my knee before Antonia, and in the excess of my joy, took one of her fair hands, and tenderly and passionately kissed it. "My dear Antonia," I said, "your candour enchants me; continue to speak without constraint; you are talking to your husband; disclose to him your inmost feelings. May I then flatter myself that you will be pleased to see our destinies united?" Basil, who entered the room at this moment, prevented my continuing. Anxious to know how his daughter had replied to me, and ready to scold her if she had displayed the slightest dislike to me, he came up and said—"Well!

are you pleased with Antonia?" "I am so satisfied," I replied, "that I am going this very instant to make preparations for my marriage." With these words I took leave of the father and the daughter, to hold counsel with my secretary on the subject.

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## CHAPTER IX.

THE MARRIAGE OF GIL BLAS WITH THE FAIR ANTONIA: HOW IT WAS CELEBRATED; WHAT PERSONS WERE PRESENT, AND THE REJOICINGS BY WHICH IT WAS FOLLOWED.

THOUGH I did not need the permission of the lords of Leyva in order to be married, Scipio and I thought that I could not decently omit to acquaint them with my intention of marrying Basil's daughter, and even of paying them the compliment of asking their consent.

I set out at once for Valencia, where they were as much surprised to see me as to learn the reason of my journey. Don Cæsar and Don Alphonso, who knew Antonia from having seen her more than once, congratulated me on choosing her for my wife. Don Cæsar especially complimented me with so much vivacity that, if I had not thought him a gentleman weaned from certain amusements,



I should have suspected him of having gone occasionally to Lirias, not so much to visit his seat as his farmer's pretty daughter. Though I was not very distrustful and jealous by nature, I might have made unpleasant reflections on this point; which I did not do, so firmly was I persuaded of the virtue of my future spouse. Seraphina, too, after having assured me that she should always take great interest in whatever concerned me, said that she had heard Antonia very highly spoken of; "but," she added, with an arch look as though to reproach me for the indifference with which I had repaid Sephora's affection, "even if her beauty had not been extolled to me, I should have great confidence in your taste, which I know to be fastidious."

Don Cæsar and his son not only approved of my marriage, but declared that they meant to bear the whole expense of it. "Go back to Lirias," they said, "and stay quietly there till you hear from us. Make no preparation for your nuptials; that duty devolves on us." To conform to their wishes, I returned to my seat. I told Basil and his daughter of the intentions of our patrons, and we awaited tidings from them as patiently as we could. We received none for eight days; but, on the ninth, to make up for this, a carriage, drawn by four mules, drove up; and in it were several dressmakers, who brought



with them an assortment of rich silks for the bride's dresses, and were escorted by several attendants in livery, mounted on splendid horses. One of these gave me a letter from Don Alphonso, informing me that next day he should be at Lirias, with his father and his wife; and that the marriage ceremony was to be performed on the day after their arrival, by the grand vicar of Valencia. And, in fact, Don Cæsar, his son, Seraphina, and the clergyman did not fail to come to my seat, in a carriage-and-six, preceded by another carriage-and-four in which were the attendants of Seraphina, and followed by the governor's guards.

The governor's lady had hardly entered the house when she expressed a great impatience to see Antonia, who on her side, as soon as she knew that Seraphina had arrived, hastened to pay her respects, and to kiss the lady's hand, which she did so gracefully that all the company admired her. "Well, my lady," said Don Cæsar to his daughter-in-law, "what do you think of Antonia? Could Santillana have made a better choice?" "No," replied Seraphina, "they are worthy of each other; there can be no doubt that their union will be a happy one." In short, everybody praised my intended; and if she was highly extolled in her serge gown, they were still more charmed when she appeared in a richer dress. It seemed as though she

had never worn any other, so noble was her mien and so graceful her deportment.

The moment having arrived when my fate was about to be linked to hers by a happy marriage, Don Alphonso took me by the hand to lead me to the altar, and Seraphina conferred the same honour on the bride. We went in this order to the village chapel, where the grand vicar was waiting to marry us. This ceremony took place amidst the acclamations of the inhabitants of Lirias, and of all the wealthy farmers in the neighbourhood, whom Basil had invited to Antonia's wedding. They had their daughters with them, tricked out in ribbons and flowers, and having tabors in their hands. Then we returned to the mansion, where, thanks to the care of Scipio, who officiated as master of the ceremonies, we found three tables set out; one for the noblemen, another for their suite, and the third, which was the largest, for all other persons who had been invited. Antonia presided at the first, by desire of the governor's lady; I did the honours of the second, and Basil was at the head of the third, where the country people were seated. As for Scipio, he never sat down at all; but went from one table to another, taking care that everybody was well served and satisfied.

The repast had been prepared by the governor's cooks, which implies that there was nothing lacking. The good wine which Master

Joachim had laid in for me was freely circulated; the guests were beginning to feel its influence, and mirth reigned throughout, when it was suddenly disturbed by an alarming incident. My secretary, being in the room where I was dining with the principal officers of Don Alphonso and Seraphina's female attendants, suddenly fainted, and lost all consciousness. I started up to go to his aid; and whilst I was engaged in bringing him to, one of the waiting-women fainted also. All who were present concluded that this double swoon involved some mystery; and, indeed, it turned out that there was one, which was soon cleared up; for shortly afterwards, Scipio, having come to himself, said to me in a low voice—"Must the most auspicious of your days be the most unpleasant of mine? It is impossible to escape one's evil fate;" he added, "I have just recognised my wife in one of Seraphina's women."

"What do I hear?" I exclaimed; "it is impossible. What! you the husband of the lady who was taken ill at the same time with yourself?" "Yes, sir," he replied, "I am her husband; and I swear to you that Fortune could not play me a worse trick than to present her to my gaze." "My friend," I replied, "I do not know what reason you may have to complain of your wife; but whatever cause she may have given you, pray constrain yourself. If you have any regard for me, do not disturb

our festivities by letting your anger break forth." "My behaviour will please you," replied Scipio; "you shall see whether I am not a very apt dissembler."

After having spoken thus, he advanced towards his wife, whom her companions had also restored to her senses; and embracing her with as much eagerness as though he had been delighted to see her again, he said, "Ah my dear Beatrix, at last Heaven brings us anew together after ten years' separation! What a happy moment for me!" "I do not know," replied his wife, "whether you are really pleased to meet me again; but at least I am sure that I never gave you any just cause to forsake me. Forsooth! you found me one night with Don Fernand de Leyva, who was in love with my mistress Julia, and whose passion I assisted;<sup>1</sup> you fancied that I listened to him at the cost of your honour and my own; thereupon jealousy turned your head; you left Toledo, and fled from me as from a monster, without asking for any explanation! Which of us two, pray, has most cause to complain?" "You, undoubtedly," replied Scipio. "Of course it was I?" she rejoined. "Very shortly after you left Toledo, Don Ferdinand married Julia, with whom I remained as long as she lived; and since an untimely death robbed us of her, I have been in her sister's

<sup>1</sup> See vol. i. bk. iv. ch. 10.



service, who can answer, as well as all her maids, for the purity of my conduct."

My secretary, not being able to prove whether she had spoken the truth, made up his mind with a good grace. "Once more," he said to his wife, "I acknowledge my fault, and ask your pardon before this honourable assembly." Then, interceding for him, I begged Beatrix to forget the past, assuring her that her husband would, from this time forward, only think of giving her satisfaction. She yielded to my entreaty, and the whole company applauded the reunion of the married couple. To celebrate it the better, they made them sit next to one another at table; we all drank to their health;<sup>1</sup> everyone congratulated them; and it looked as though the festivities were being held rather on the occasion of their reconciliation than on account of my marriage.

The third table was the first to be deserted. The young villagers, preferring love-making to good cheer, left it in order to dance with the country girls, who, by the sound of their tabors, soon attracted the people from the other tables, and invited them to follow their example. Then everybody got in motion; the governor's officers began dancing with the maids of his

<sup>1</sup> The original has *on leur porta des brindes*, which words were formerly used in French for "drinking a toast." In Larchey's *Dictionnaire de l'Argot* (1873), *être dans les brindezingues*, to be intoxicated, is given as derived from *brindes*.



wife, and the noblemen themselves joined the dancers. Don Alphonso danced a saraband with Seraphina, and Don Cæsar another with Antonia, who afterwards took me for a partner, and who acquitted herself not badly for a girl who had only received a few dancing lessons at Albarazin, in the house of one of her relatives, married to one of the townsmen. As for me, who, as I have already said, had learned to dance while living with the Marchioness of Chaves, I impressed the company as a great performer. Beatrix and Scipio, on their part, began some private conversation, that they might give each other an account of what had befallen them since they had been separated; but their talk was interrupted by Seraphina, who, having just been informed of their mutual recognition, sent for them to express her joy at the event. "Young people," she said, "on this day of rejoicing it is an additional satisfaction for me to see you restored to one another. Friend Scipio," she added, "I give you your wife again, and I assure you that her conduct has always been irreproachable. Live here with her on good terms. And you, Beatrix, attach yourself to Antonia, and be no less devoted to her than your husband is to Señor de Santillana." Scipio, unable after this to regard his wife otherwise than as a second Penelope, promised to hold her in all conceivable estimation.

The country lads and lasses, after dancing until nightfall, returned to their homes, but the rejoicings still continued in my own house, where a splendid supper was prepared; and when it was time to go to bed, the grand vicar blessed the nuptial couch, whilst Seraphina undressed the bride, the noble lords of Leyva doing me a like honour. The greatest joke was, that Don Alphonso's officers and Donna Seraphina's waiting-women took it into their heads, to amuse themselves, to perform the same ceremony, and to undress Beatrix and Scipio, who, to make the scene more comical, gravely submitted to be stripped and put to bed.

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## CHAPTER X.

THE SEQUEL TO THE MARRIAGE OF GIL BLAS AND  
THE BEAUTIFUL ANTONIA. THE BEGINNING OF  
SCIPIO'S STORY.

ON the day after my marriage the lords of Leyva returned to Valencia, after having given me numberless fresh proofs of their friendship; so that my secretary and myself remained alone at the house with our wives and attendants.

The pains we both took to please these ladies were not thrown away; I soon inspired

my wife with as much love as I felt for her, and Scipio made his better half forget the sorrow he had caused her. Beatrix, who was of an easy and compliant disposition, had no difficulty in securing the good graces of her new mistress, and gained her confidence. In short, we all four agreed wonderfully well together, and began to enjoy a very enviable lot. Our days were spent in amusing ourselves pleasantly. Antonia was naturally serious, but Beatrix and I were very cheerful; and even if we had not been so, Scipio's presence was enough to drive away melancholy. He was incomparable as a companion, and one of those funny fellows who have only to show themselves to make a whole company merry.

One day when we took it into our heads after dinner to take a nap in the pleasantest spot of the wood, my secretary was in such exuberant spirits that he drove away our inclination for going to sleep by his amusing talk. "Be quiet, friend," I said to him; "there is no getting a nap whilst you are speaking; or else, if you must prevent our going to sleep, tell us some story worthy of being listened to." "Most willingly," he replied. "Shall I tell you the history of King Pelayo?"<sup>1</sup> "I had much rather hear your own," I replied; "but that is a pleasure which you have not thought proper to afford me since we have lived to—

<sup>1</sup> See vol. i. bk. i. chap. iv. p. 25.

gether, and which it seems I am never likely to have." "How is that?" he said. "If I have not told you my story, it is because you have never expressed the least desire to hear it; so it is not my fault if you are ignorant of my adventures; if you are really anxious to learn them, I am ready to satisfy your curiosity." Antonia, Beatrix, and I took him at his word, and disposed ourselves to listen to his story, which could not fail to prove agreeable, either by amusing us or by sending us to sleep:—

Scipio began, as follows:—If it had depended on myself, I certainly should have liked to have been the son of a grandee of the first rank, or at the very least of some knight of Saint Iago or of Alcantara; but as a man does not select his own father, you are to know that mine, by name Torribio Scipio, was a worthy officer of the Holy Brotherhood. As he was going backward and forward on the high road, where his calling obliged him almost always to be, he met one day by chance, between Cuença and Toledo, a young gipsy girl, whom he thought very pretty. She was alone, on foot, and carried her whole fortune in a sort of knapsack on her back. "Where are you going to, my darling?" he said, softening his voice, which was naturally very gruff. "Señor cavalier," she replied, "I am going to Toledo, where I hope to gain an honest livelihood by one means or another." "Your intentions are praiseworthy," he re-



joined, "and I doubt not you have more than one string to your bow." "Yes, thank Heaven," she answered, "I possess several talents; amongst others I can make pomatums and perfumes, very serviceable to the ladies; I can tell fortunes, search for things lost with a sieve and shears,<sup>1</sup> and show all that a person desires to see in a mirror or in a glass."

Torribio, thinking that such a girl would be a very good match for such a man as he was, who hardly got a livelihood out of his own profession, though he was very clever at it, made her an offer of marriage. The gipsy was nothing loath to despise the suit of an officer of the Holy Brotherhood, and accepted his proposal with pleasure. They settled it amongst themselves, and both went with all speed to Toledo, where they were married. In me you behold the worthy fruit of these grand nuptials. Established in one of the suburbs, my mother began by selling pomatums and perfumes; but not finding this trade sufficiently lucrative, she turned fortune-teller. Then crowns and pistoles were showered upon her; a thousand dupes of either sex soon raised the reputation of La Coscolina—for such was my gipsy mamma's name—and every day some one or other came to ask her to exercise her art. Now, it was a needy nephew, who wanted to know when his uncle, whose sole heir he was, was going to

<sup>1</sup> See vol. ii. bk. iv. ch. viii. p. 116, note 1.



depart for the other world; and now it was some girl, eager to know whether a gentleman, whose attentions she had rewarded, and who had promised to marry her, would keep his word.

You will be good enough to observe that my mother's predictions were always favourable to those to whom they were made. If they happened to be fulfilled, so much the better; but if any person came to reproach her that the opposite to what she had predicted had come about, she coolly replied that this must be set down to the demon, who, in spite of the powerful incantations which she employed to make him reveal the future, would sometimes be malicious enough to deceive her.

When, for the honour of the profession, my mother thought the devil in person ought to be raised during her spells, it was Torribio Scipio who played the part, and who acquitted himself to perfection, the gruffness of his voice and the ugliness of his face giving him an appearance suitable to the individual he represented. A person in the slightest degree superstitious would be terrified by the figure of my father. But one day, unluckily, a brute of a captain wanted to see the devil, and ran him through the body. The Holy Office, being informed of the devil's death, sent its officers to La Coscolina, whom they seized, together with all her goods; and I, who was

but seven years old at the time, was put into the Orphan Asylum.<sup>1</sup> There were certain charitable clergymen in this establishment, who, being well paid for looking after the education of these poor orphans, took the trouble of teaching them to read and write. They fancied that I was a very promising boy, and so they picked me out from all the rest, and chose me to go their errands. They sent me to take their letters in town; I went hither and thither for them, and said the responses at mass. Out of gratitude they undertook to teach me Latin; but they set about it too roughly; and treated me so sternly, notwithstanding all the little services I rendered them, that, unable to stand it any longer, I one fine day ran away when I was out on an errand; and instead of returning to the Asylum, I left Toledo by one of the suburbs leading to Seville.

Though I was barely nine years old, I already felt the pleasure of being free, and master of my own actions. I was without money and without food; but no matter, I had no more lessons to learn nor themes to write. After walking for two hours my little limbs began to refuse their office. I had never yet made such a long journey, and was obliged to stop and take some rest. I sat down

<sup>1</sup> In the original, instead of *des enfants*, we find the Spanish *los Niños*.

at the foot of a tree near the high road, and there, to amuse myself, I took my *Accidence* out of my pocket, and began conning over it in jest. Then, happening to remember the blows and stripes which I had received on its account, I tore up the leaves, saying in a rage—"Ah, you beastly book! you shall never make me shed tears any more!" Whilst I was sating my vengeance by strewing the ground about me with declensions and conjugations, there passed that way an old white-bearded recluse, wearing large spectacles, and having a venerable appearance. He came up to me; and if he looked at me very closely, I also examined him well. "My little man," said he with a smile, "it seems to me that we have both been looking affectionately at each other, and that we could not do better than dwell together in my hermitage, which is not two hundred yards off." "Many thanks," I answered, rather pertly. "I have not the least desire to become a hermit." At this reply the good old man burst into a laugh, and said to me, as he embraced me—"My son, my dress should not frighten you; for if it is not pretty it is useful; it makes me the master of a charming retreat and of the villages in the neighbourhood, whose inhabitants love, or rather idolize me. Come along with me," he added, "and fear nothing; I will dress you in a garb like my own. If you

like it, you shall share with me the pleasant life which I lead ; and if it does not hit your fancy, you shall not only be at liberty to leave me, but you may also depend on it that in the event of our parting I will not fail to do something for you."

I let myself be persuaded, and followed the old hermit, who put several questions to me whilst going along, to which I replied with a simplicity which I did not always retain in after life. When we reached the hermitage he set some fruit before me, which I devoured, having eaten nothing all day but a piece of dry bread, on which I had breakfasted at the Asylum in the morning. The hermit, seeing me make such good play with my jaws, said—" Cheer up, my lad, do not spare my fruit ; thank Heaven, I have plenty of it. I have not brought you here to let you die of hunger." And indeed that was true enough ; for an hour after our arrival, he lighted a fire, put a leg of mutton on the spit, and, as I was turning it, set out a little table, which he covered with a dirty napkin, and on which he placed two plates, one for himself and one for me.

When the meat was done enough he took it from the spit, and cut some slices for our supper, which was not entirely a horse's meal, since we drank some excellent wine, of which he also had a good store. " Well, my chicken ! " he said, when we had finished, " are you satisfied



with my fare? Is it not as good as that of the Orphan Asylum? You shall be treated every day in the same way if you stay with me. For the rest," he continued, "you shall do in this hermitage just as you please. All I require of you is to accompany me whenever I go to collect gifts in the neighbouring villages; you will be of use in leading the donkey laden with two panniers, which the charitable peasants generally fill with eggs, bread, meat, and fish. That is all I ask of you, and it seems to me that it is not much." "Oh, I will do all you ask," I said, "so long as you do not make me learn Latin." Brother Chrysostom, for that was the old hermit's name, could not help laughing at my simplicity, and assured me once more that he did not mean to oppose my inclinations.

On the very next day we went out collecting gifts with the ass, which I led by the halter. We reaped a plentiful harvest, for every peasant gladly put something in our panniers. One threw in it a whole loaf, another a large piece of bacon, a third a stuffed goose, and a fourth a partridge. Without entering into further particulars, we took home enough provisions to last us for more than a week, which plainly showed the friendship and esteem in which the villagers held the hermit. It is true that he was of great service to them. He gave them advice whenever they came to consult him; he



restored peace in households where discord reigned, and made up matches for those girls who seemed tired of a single life. If he knew that two wealthy farmers were on bad terms, he went to see them, and managed so well that he brought them together again. In short, he had remedies for ever so many different diseases, and taught certain prayers to married women who desired to have children.

You see, from what I have just said, that I was well fed in my hermitage ; I was equally well off for a bed, for I was lying on good fresh straw, with a pillow of coarse cloth under my head, and a coverlet of the same material over me, and slept soundly the whole night. Brother Chrysostom, who had promised me a hermit's gown, made one for me, out of one of his old garments, and called me little Brother Scipio. No sooner did I appear in the various villages in my monastic regimentals, than the people thought I looked so pretty that the ass was better laden than ever. They vied with one another who should give most to the little brother, so pleased were they to see him !

The easy, idle life which I led with the old hermit could not be displeasing to a boy of my age. I liked it so much that I should have continued it for ever, if the Fates had not spun out days of a very different kind for me ; but it was my destiny soon to be snatched away from

this tranquil life, and to take leave of Brother Chrysostom in the way I shall now relate.

I often perceived the old man working at the cushion which served him for a pillow ; he did nothing but unstitch and stitch it up again, and one day I saw him put some money into it. This sight excited a feeling of curiosity in me, which I promised myself to satisfy the first time he went to Toledo, where he was accustomed to go alone once a week. I waited impatiently for the day, though, as yet, with no other design than that of satisfying my curiosity. At length the good man set out on his journey; and I undid his pillow, in which I found, amidst the wool with which it was stuffed, coins of all sorts, amounting to about fifty crowns.

This treasure was apparently a tribute of the gratitude of the peasants whom the hermit had cured by his remedies, and of the women who had obtained children by virtue of his prayers. However that may have been, I no sooner saw that it was money, which I could appropriate with impunity, than my gipsy nature declared itself. I felt an inclination to steal it, which can only be set down to the impetus of the blood which flowed in my veins. I yielded to the temptation without a struggle, tied the money in a coarse cloth bag, wherein we used to put our combs and night caps; and then, after having laid aside my hermit's garb, and resumed

the hospital dress, I left the hermitage, fancying that I was carrying off in my bag all the wealth of the Indies.

You have heard my first exploit, continued Scipio, and I have no doubt you will expect a succession of similar deeds. Your expectation shall not be disappointed; for I have other exploits of the same kind to relate to you, before I come to my praiseworthy actions; but I shall come to these, and you will see by my story that a rogue can very well become an honest man.

Child as I was, I was not silly enough to take again the road to Toledo, which would have been running the risk of meeting Brother Chrysostom, who might have made me give up his hoard in an unpleasant manner. I followed another route, leading to the village of Galves, where I stopped at an inn, of which the landlady was a widow of forty, who possessed all the qualities necessary to carry on her business successfully. This woman had no sooner cast eyes on me than, judging by my dress that I must be a truant from an Orphan Asylum, she asked me who I was, and whither I was going. I replied that, having lost my father and mother, I was looking for a place. "Child," said she, "can you read?" I told her I could, and also write to perfection. In point of fact, I could just form my letters, and join them together in such a

manner that they looked somewhat like writing; and that was enough for the requirements of a village inn. "Then I will take you in my service," replied the landlady; "you will not be useless to me, for you shall keep an account of my book debts and scores. I shall give you no wages," she added, "as this inn is frequented by very respectable persons who do not forget the servants. You may reckon on pretty good perquisites."

I accepted the offer, reserving to myself, you may be sure, the right of taking a change of air, whenever my stay in Galves should cease to be pleasant. No sooner was I engaged as a servant in this inn than my mind was troubled and became very anxious; and the more I thought about it the better my fear seemed to be founded. I did not wish it to be known that I had money, and I was much puzzled to find out where it could be hidden, so as to be safe from any one's hand but mine. I was not yet well enough acquainted with the house to put my trust in the best places for hiding it. What embarrassment wealth brings with it! I was in continual alarm. At last I determined to stow away my bag in a corner of our corn-loft, where there was some straw; and thinking it safer there than elsewhere, I became as easy about it as I well could.

There were three servants in this house: a big ostler, a young maid from Galicia, and my-



self. Each of us got as much as we could from the travellers who stopped there. I always came in for some small change when these gentlemen paid their bill. They also gave something to the ostler, for taking care of their horses; but as for the Galician girl, who was the idol of the muleteers who passed that way, she got more crowns than we stivers. As soon as I had received a penny, I took it to the loft to increase my treasure; and the more I saw my wealth grow, the more I felt my little heart bound up in it. Sometimes I kissed my coins and gazed on them with a delight which none but misers can conceive.

The passion which I felt for my treasure, constrained me to go and look at it thirty times a day. I often met the landlady on the stairs, and she, naturally suspicious, was curious one day to know what could be always taking me to the loft. She went up, and began ferreting about everywhere, fancying that perhaps I might be hiding in the attic some articles which I had purloined in the house. She did not omit to pull the straw about which hid my bag; and she discovered it, then opening it, and seeing that it contained crowns and pistoles, she believed, or pretended to believe, that I had stolen this money from her; and so she seized it to make sure. After this, calling me a little wretch and a little rascal, she bade the ostler, who did whatever



she told him, give me fifty good lashes with his whip. Having thus been soundly thrashed she turned me out of doors, saying she would suffer no rogues to live in her house. It was no use protesting that I had not robbed the landlady ; she maintained the contrary, and was believed before me. Thus the coins of Brother Chrysostom passed from the hands of a thief into those of a she-thief.

I wept over the loss of my money as a father weeps over the death of an only son ; and if my tears did not bring back what I had lost, they at least excited the compassion of some people who saw how they flowed, and amongst others of the vicar of Galves, who happened to come by. He seemed moved by my sad plight, and took me with him to the parsonage. There, to gain my confidence, or rather to pump me, he began by pitying me. "This poor child," he said, in a tone full of compassion, "is much to be pitied for having no one to take care of him ! Can we be astonished if, abandoned at so tender an age, he has been guilty of some wicked deed ? Grown-up men, even in their lifetime, have much trouble in avoiding such actions." Then, addressing me, he added—"My lad, from what part of Spain do you come ? and who are your relatives ? You look as if you belonged to some family of rank. Speak to me confidentially, and depend upon it, I will not forsake you."

By such insinuating and charitable words the vicar gradually induced me to tell him my whole story, which I did very frankly. I confessed everything, after which he said—"My friend, though it is hardly right for hermits to hoard up money, this does not lessen your crime. By robbing Brother Chrysostom you have nevertheless sinned against the Commandment which forbids stealing; but you may be consoled by the fact that I will undertake to make the landlady give back the money, and to send it to the brother in his hermitage; you may therefore make your conscience perfectly easy on that score." This, I confess, was scarcely a cause of anxiety to me. The vicar, who had a scheme of his own, did not stop at this. "My child," he continued, "I will interest myself on your behalf, and get you a good place. To-morrow I will send you by a muleteer to my nephew, a canon of the cathedral at Toledo. He will not refuse, at my request, to receive you among his servants, who live in plenty in his house, like so many incumbents, on the revenues of his prebendal stall. You will be thoroughly well off there, I assure you."

This assurance so far consoled me that I thought no more of my bag, nor of the lashes I had received. My mind was wholly occupied with the idea of leading the pleasant life of an incumbent. Next day, as I was eating my

breakfast, a muleteer, by the vicar's orders, arrived at the parsonage with two mules ready saddled and bridled. I was helped on one, the muleteer sprang on the other, and we set out for Toledo. My fellow-traveller was a jovial companion who liked nothing better than to make himself merry at the expense of his fellow-men. "My little volunteer," he said, "you have a good friend in the worthy vicar of Galves, as he has shown you. He could not give you a stronger proof of his affection than by putting you with his nephew the Canon, whom I have the honour of knowing, and who is beyond contradiction the pink of the whole chapter. He is not one of those devotees whose pale and meagre faces preach of mortification; he has a full face, ruddy cheeks, and a merry look, lives well, does not decline any pleasure that turns up, and particularly likes good cheer. You will live in clover in his house."<sup>1</sup>

The rascal of a muleteer, perceiving that I was listening to him with great satisfaction, went on dilating upon the happiness I should enjoy in being the Canon's servant. He did not cease talking about it until we had reached the village of Obisa,<sup>2</sup> where we stopped to let

<sup>1</sup> In the original, *vous serez dans sa maison comme un petit coq en pête*, You will be in his house like a little cock which is fed up, and therefore has plenty to eat and nothing to do.

<sup>2</sup> See vol. i. INTRODUCTORY NOTICE, p. xl.

our mules rest a while. There, by the greatest good luck, I found out that I was being deceived. It was thus that I made the discovery. The muleteer, as he was going to and fro in the inn, accidentally dropped from his pocket a paper, which I was clever enough to pick up without his noticing it, and which I contrived to read whilst he was in the stable. It was a letter addressed to the priests of the Orphan Asylum, and was couched in these terms :—

“Gentlemen,—As an act of charity, I consider it my duty to send back to you a little rogue who has escaped from your asylum. He seems to have some intelligence, and to deserve that you should have the kindness to keep him shut up in your house. I have no doubt that you will make a sensible boy of him by frequent chastisements. May Heaven keep your pious and charitable worships!—THE VICAR OF GALVES.”

When I had finished reading this letter, which showed me the good intentions of the worthy vicar, I did not hesitate as to what I was to do. To quit the inn, and to reach the banks of the Tagus, more than a league from where I was, did not take me long. Fear lent me wings to fly from the priests of the Orphan Asylum, whither I positively resolved never to return, so much had they disgusted me with their method of teaching Latin! I entered Toledo



as cheerfully as if I had known where to get anything to eat or to drink. To be sure, it is a blessed city, where no man of intelligence, obliged to live at other people's expense, need ever die of hunger. But I was still very young, and could not flatter myself with finding there any means of subsistence. Nevertheless, fortune smiled on me. I had hardly reached the market-place when a well-dressed gentleman, near whom I passed, caught me by the arm and said,—“My little fellow, do you want a place? I should be glad to have such a page as you.” “And I should be glad,” I answered, “to have such a master as you.” “If that be so,” he said, “I engage you from this very moment; follow me.” Which I did without asking any more questions.

This gentleman, who might be about thirty years old, and was called Don Abel, had a rather handsome set of rooms in a boarding-house. He was a professional gamester, and this is how we lived. In the morning I cut him enough tobacco to smoke five or six pipes; I brushed his clothes, and went for a barber to shave him and trim his moustache; after which he went his round of the gambling houses, whence he never returned until between eleven and twelve o'clock at night. But every morning, before going out, he took care to produce from his pocket three reals, which he gave me for my day's expense, leaving



me at liberty to do what I liked until ten at night. So long as I was in doors when he returned, he was quite satisfied with me. He had a livery suit made for me, in which I looked exactly like a little messenger of gallant ladies. I liked my place very well; indeed, I could not have found one more to my mind.

I had led this happy life for nearly a month, when my employer asked me if I was satisfied with him, and on my answer that I could not be more so, he replied, "Well then, we will leave to-morrow for Seville, whither business calls me. You will not be sorry to see the capital of Andalusia. 'He who has not seen Seville,' the proverb runs, 'has seen nothing.'" I told him I was ready to follow him anywhere. On the same day the Seville carrier came to the boarding-house to fetch a large chest, wherein were all my master's clothes; and on the day following we set out for Andalusia.

The worthy Don Abel was so lucky at play that he only lost when he chose, which compelled him frequently to change his quarters, so as to escape from the resentment of his dupes; and this was the reason of our journey. On our arrival at Seville we took furnished lodgings near the Cordova gate, and began to live as we had lived at Toledo. But my master found some difference between the two towns. He met players as fortunate as himself in the Seville

gambling-houses, so that he sometimes came home very much out of temper. One morning, still in a bad humour at having lost a hundred pistoles the day before, he asked me why I had not taken his dirty linen to his laundress, who was washing and scenting it for him. I told him I had forgotten it. Thereupon he flew into a rage, and gave me half-a-dozen boxes on the ear, with such force as to make me see more lights than there were in Solomon's Temple. "There, you young wretch," he said, "take that to teach you to attend more closely to your duties. Must I be always at your heels to remind you of what you have to do? Why are you not as clever at your work as you are at eating? As you are no fool, why do you not anticipate what I wish you to do, and what I want?" With these words he went out of the room, leaving me much mortified at having been struck for so trifling a fault, and resolved to be avenged, if a chance arose.

I know not what happened to him some time later in a gambling-house, but he came back one evening very much irritated. "Scipio," he said, "I have determined to go to Italy, and I shall sail the day after to-morrow in a vessel returning to Genoa. I have my reasons for undertaking this journey. I think you would like to accompany me, and profit by such a fine opportunity of seeing the loveliest country in the world." I replied that I asked for

nothing better ; I even said I was impatient to see Italy ; but at the same time I made up my mind to disappear at the moment of starting. I thought by this means to avenge myself on my master, and considered the scheme very ingenious. I liked it so much, that I could not help mentioning it to a professional swash-buckler whom I had met in the street. Since I had been in Seville I had picked up some bad acquaintances, and this one in particular. I told him how and why my ears had been boxed ; and then communicated to him my plan of leaving Don Abel when he should be on the point of sailing ; I asked him what he thought of my resolution.

The swash-buckler knitted his brows as he listened to me, and twirled up the ends of his moustache ; then, assuming a serious air, he blamed my master, and said—" My little man, you are dishonoured for ever if you are satisfied with the paltry vengeance you contemplate. It is not enough to let Don Abel start alone, for that would not punish him sufficiently ; the chastisement should be proportioned to the outrage. We cannot hesitate. Let us carry off his clothes and his money, and share them like brothers, after he is gone." Though I was naturally inclined to thieving, the proposal of a robbery of such importance startled me. But the arch-rogué who planned it, managed to persuade me ; and this is how our enterprise

fell out. The ruffian, who was a big, sturdy fellow, came next day towards nightfall to see me at our lodgings. I showed him the trunk in which my master had already packed his clothes, and asked him whether he alone could carry such a heavy box. "Heavy!" he said: "I can tell you that when it comes to taking away other folk's property, I could carry Noah's Ark." After having spoken thus, he went up to the chest, put it easily on his shoulders, and went downstairs with very light steps. I followed him with the same caution, and we had just got to the street door when Don Abel, whom his lucky star brought thither so fortunately for him, suddenly appeared before us.

"Where are you going with that trunk?" he said to me. I was so taken by surprise that I stood without uttering a word; and the ruffian, seeing that our plan had failed, threw the box on the ground and took to flight, to avoid an explanation. "Where are you going with that box, I say?" asked my master, repeating his question. "Sir," I answered, more dead than alive, "I was going to have it taken to the vessel in which you are to sail to-morrow for Italy." "Indeed," he retorted, "do you know the vessel I am going by?" "No, sir," I replied, "but I have a tongue in my head;<sup>1</sup> I should have inquired at the port, and some one

<sup>1</sup> The original has *qui a langue va à Rome*, he who has a tongue goes to Rome.



would have told me." At this reply, which he did not believe, he darted such a furious look at me, that I thought he was going to box my ears again. "Who ordered you," he cried, "to have my trunk taken from this house?" "You yourself," I answered. "Who? I?" he rejoined with astonishment, "I told you?" "Certainly," I replied; "remember how you scolded me but a few days ago. Did you not tell me, when you beat me, that you wished me to anticipate your orders, and do, of my own accord, what was necessary in your service. In consequence of this remark, I was having your trunk taken to the ship." Then the gamester, seeing that I was more of a rogue than he had thought, said to me calmly, as he discharged me, "Go about your business, Master Scipio, and Heaven be your guide! You are too clever for your age. I don't like playing with folks who have sometimes a card too many, and sometimes a card too few. Get out of my sight," he added, changing his tone, "or I shall make you sing without music."

I spared him the trouble of twice telling me to go. I left him at once, mortally afraid that he would make me give up my clothes, which he fortunately left me. I walked along the streets, considering where I could go and lodge, with only two reals in my pocket. I came to the gate of the Archbishop's palace, and as they were then getting ready his Grace's



supper, there arose from the kitchens a savoury odour which could be smelt a league away. "Plague on it!" I said to myself, "I could do very well with one of those stews which tickle my nose; I would even be satisfied just to dip my four fingers and thumb in it. But stay! cannot I devise a means of tasting these good things whereof I now only sniff up the fumes? Why not? It does not seem impossible." Thereupon I exercised my imagination; and by dint of considering, a trick came into my mind which I forthwith put into practice, and which succeeded. I entered the court of the palace, running towards the kitchen, and crying with all my might—"Help! help!" as though some man were after me to kill me.

At my repeated cries, Master Diego, the Archbishop's cook, ran with three or four scullions to learn what was the matter; and seeing no one but me, he asked me why I was shouting so loudly. "Oh sir," I replied, with every appearance of being in mortal terror, "for the love of Saint Polycarp, save me, I beseech you, from the rage of a cut-throat who wants to kill me!" "Where is this cut-throat?" cried Diego. "You are quite alone, and I don't even see a cat at your heels. Come, my lad, take courage; it looks as if someone has wished to frighten you for a joke; he did well not to follow you into the palace, for we should have cut off his

ears, at the very least.” “No, no,” I said to the cook, “it was not in fun that the man ran after me. He is a big foot-pad who wanted to rob me, and I am sure he is now waiting for me in the street.” “Then he may wait long enough,” he replied, “for you shall stay here till to-morrow, and sup with the scullions, who will treat you well, and give you a bed.”

I was delighted to hear these last words ; and it was a wonderful sight, after being taken by Master Diego into the kitchens, to behold the preparations for his grace’s supper. I counted fifteen persons at work on it, but I could not count the dishes which met my gaze, so many had Providence taken care to supply for the Archbishop. Inhaling freely all the fumes from the made dishes which I had sniffed from a distance, it was here that I first became acquainted with sensuality. I had the honour of supping and sleeping with the scullions, who treated me right well, and whose friendship I won so completely that on the next day, when I went to thank Master Diego for so generously giving me refuge, he said—“Our kitchen lads have been with me in a body, to declare how pleased they would be to have you for a fellow-servant, so much do they like your disposition. Would you, on your part, like to be their companion ?” I replied that, if I had that happiness, I should think myself at

the summit of my wishes. "In that case, my friend," he replied, "consider yourself from this moment a member of the Archbishop's household." With these words he took me to the major-domo, to whom he introduced me, and who, on account of my sprightly looks, thought me worthy of being received among the pot-scrapers.

I was no sooner installed in so honourable a position, than Master Diego, after the manner of the cooks of great houses, who privately send dishes to their female favourites, selected me to carry to a certain lady in the neighbourhood, loins of veal at one time, and poultry or game at another. This good lady was a widow on the right side of thirty, very pretty, very lively, and to all appearance, not scrupulously faithful to her cook. All the same, he was not content with sending her meat, bread, sugar, and oil, but he also kept her supplied with wine, and all this at the expense of his Grace the Archbishop.

I brightened up considerably in his Grace's palace, where I played a rather amusing prank, which is still spoken of in Seville. The pages and a few other servants, to celebrate his Grace's birthday, took it into their heads to act a play. They chose the *Benavides*; and as they wanted a lad about my age to personate the young king of Leon, they cast me for the part. The major-domo, who prided himself on his de-

clamation, took me in hand to train me, and after a few lessons, declared that I should not be the worst actor of the company. As the Archbishop bore the cost of the entertainment, you can imagine that no expense was spared in getting it up magnificently. A stage was erected in the largest room of the palace, and richly decorated. At the side scene a bed of turf was made, where I was to be discovered asleep, when the Moors were to come and throw themselves on me, to make me prisoner. When the actors were ready to represent the play, the Archbishop fixed a day for the performance, and was pleased to invite the most influential noblemen and ladies of the city to be present.

The important day having arrived, each actor thought only of his dress. Mine was brought by a tailor, accompanied by our major-domo, who, having been at the trouble of teaching me my part, thought himself bound to look after my costume. The tailor put on me a rich robe of blue velvet, adorned with gold lace and buttons, and with hanging sleeves set off with fringe of the same metal; while the major-domo himself placed on my head a pasteboard crown, studded with small pearls, intermixed with false diamonds. Moreover, round my waist was tied a sash of pink silk worked with silver flowers; and at every article they put on, it seemed that they were lending me wings to fly away with and bolt. At length the



comedy began towards the evening. The young king of Leon appears first in the piece, and pronounces a long soliloquy. As I was playing this character, I opened the scene with a speech in verse, which stated, at the end, that, unable to resist the charms of sleep, I was going to abandon myself to it. At the same time, I withdrew to the side scenes, and threw myself on the turf bed that had been prepared for me; but, instead of going to sleep, I began to think how I could reach the street, and get off with my royal clothes. A small private staircase, leading under the stage and into the hall, seemed suitable to the execution of my plan. I rose quietly, and seeing that no one had observed it, I ran down this staircase, which took me into the hall, whence I reached the door, crying—"Make way! Make way! I am going to change my dress." Everyone stood aside to let me pass; so that in less than a minute I was safely out of the palace, thanks to the darkness, and betook myself to the house of my friend, the swashbuckler.<sup>1</sup>

He was greatly astonished when I appeared before him, dressed as I was. I let him into the

<sup>1</sup> Franceson says that several traits of the history of Scipio, such as his adventures with Don Abel, the narrative of the theatrical representation, and even the title of Lope de Vega's play, *los Benavides*, as well as Scipio's flight in his royal dress, are taken from the Spanish novel *Vida y Hechos de Estevanilla Gonsalez, etc.* These traits are not found in Lesage's so-called translation, which was published in 1734, one year before the last volume of *Gil Blas* saw the light.

secret, and he laughed heartily. Then, embracing me with so much the more joy because he flattered himself with the sweet expectation of sharing in the spoils of the king of Leon, he congratulated me on having played such a clever trick, and told me that, if I did not belie my character subsequently, I should one day make some noise in the world by my intelligence. After we had both made merry, and split our sides with laughter, I said to the fellow—"What shall we do with these handsome clothes?" "Make yourself easy on that score," he replied, "I know an honest second-hand dealer, who, without displaying the least curiosity, will buy any thing you wish to sell him, so long as it answers his purpose. I will fetch him to-morrow morning, and bring him here." Accordingly he went out early next morning, leaving me in bed, and came back two hours afterwards with the dealer, carrying a bundle of yellow cloth. "My friend," he said, "I present to you Mr Ybagnez of Segovia, a dealer honourable and honest, if ever there was one, and who, in spite of the bad example set to him by his fellow-tradesmen, prides himself on the most scrupulous integrity. He will tell you to a fraction what the clothes which you want to get rid of are worth, and you can rely on his estimate." "Oh, that he can!" said the dealer. "I should be a great wretch were I to appraise any thing below its value. People have never reproached

Ybagnez of Segovia with that, thank Heaven, and they never shall. Let me see the clothes you wish to sell," he continued; "and I shall tell you conscientiously what they are worth." "Here they are," said the swashbuckler, showing them to him; "confess that nothing could be more magnificent. Look at the beauty of this Genoa velvet, and at these rich trimmings." "I am delighted with them," replied the dealer, after examining the dress very closely, "nothing could be handsomer." "And what do you think of the fine pearls on the crown?" resumed my friend. "If they were rounder," answered Ybagnez, "they would be invaluable. However, such as they are, I think them very beautiful, and like them as well as the rest. "I agree with you," he continued, "and I wish to be just. An unprincipled dealer, in my place, would pretend to disparage these articles, for the sake of getting them cheaper, and would not be ashamed to offer you a score of pistoles for them; but I, being a scrupulous man, will give you forty for them."

If Ybagnez had said a hundred he would still not have been an upright appraiser, because the pearls alone were well worth two hundred. The swashbuckler, who had an understanding with him, said to me—"See how lucky you are to have fallen into the hands of an honest man. Señor Ybagnez values things as scrupulously as though he were on the point of death."

“That is true,” said the dealer; “and there is no beating the price down or running it up, by a farthing. Well!” he added, “is it a bargain; and shall I count out the money to you?” “Stay,” answered the swashbuckler, “first of all my little friend must try on the dress I made you bring for him: I am very much mistaken if it will not just fit him.” Then the dealer, untying his bundle, showed me a second-hand doublet and breeches of good dark brown cloth, with silver buttons. I got out of bed to try on the dress, which, though too big and too long, seemed to these gentlemen made on purpose for me. Ybaguez valued it at ten pistoles, and as he was not to be beaten down, I had to be satisfied with his estimate. He accordingly drew thirty pistoles out of his purse, and counted them out on the table; after which he made up another bundle of my royal robes and crown, and carried them off; and no doubt congratulated himself on having begun the day so well.<sup>1</sup>

When he was gone, the swashbuckler said to me, “I am very well satisfied with that dealer.” And so he might well be; for I am sure his share of the profit was at least a hundred

<sup>1</sup> This is the second time that we meet a roguish dealer of old clothes in *Gil Blas*. The first time is, when Gil Blas, after having received money from Donna Mencia, buys some clothes from a dealer, recommended by the landlord Majuelo. (See vol. i., book i., ch. 15.)



pistoles. But he was not content with that; he took without any ceremony half the money on the table, and left me the other half, saying—“My little friend Scipio, I advise you at once to leave the town with these fifteen pistoles; for you can well imagine that they will search for you everywhere, by the Archbishop’s order. It would grieve me deeply if, after having signalised yourself by an action which will do honour to your history, you should foolishly get yourself into prison.” I replied that I had quite made up my mind to leave Seville; and accordingly, after buying a hat and a few shirts, I gained the delightful open country, leading amidst vineyards and olive groves, to the ancient city of Carmona, and three days afterwards I arrived at Cordova.

I went to lodge at an inn close by the great square where the tradesmen live. I gave myself out for a gentleman’s son from Toledo, who was travelling for his pleasure. I was well enough dressed to be believed, and a few pistoles which I contrived to let the landlord see, as though by chance, completely persuaded him of the truth of my story. Perhaps, also, my extreme youth led him to think that I might be some little rascal, playing the truant, after having robbed his parents. However this may have been, he did not seem anxious to know more than I told him, apparently for fear lest his curiosity might induce me to change my lodg-

ings. For six reals a day any one could live very well in this inn, where there were generally plenty of people. In the evening I counted as many as a dozen persons who sat down to supper. It was odd to see each person eating without saying a word, except one man, who, talking incessantly and at random, made up by his chatter for the silence of the rest. He set up for a wit, told stories, and laboured to amuse the company by his jests. They broke into a laugh from time to time, less indeed to applaud his sallies than to ridicule them.

As for myself, I paid so little attention to the talk of this eccentric individual, that I should have got up from table, without being able to say what he had been speaking about, if he had not found means to interest me in his conversation. "Gentlemen," he cried, towards the end of our meal, "all I have told you is nothing in comparison with what I am going to tell you; I have kept for the last a most amusing story, an adventure which happened a few days ago at the Archbishop of Seville's palace. It was told me by an acquaintance of mine, a bachelor of arts, who assured me that he was present at the time." These words rather moved me, for I had no doubt that this adventure was my own, and I was not mistaken. This man gave a faithful account of what had happened, and even informed me, what I did not know, namely,

what had occurred in the hall after my departure. I will tell you what it was.

Hardly had I taken to flight before the Moors, who, according to the play they were acting, had to carry me off, appeared on the scene, for the purpose of surprising me on my bed of turf, where they thought I was sleeping; but when they were about to throw themselves on the King of Leon, they were much astonished to find neither king nor castle.<sup>1</sup> The comedy was at once interrupted. All the actors were distracted: some of them called me by name; others ran to look for me; one was shouting, and another wished me at the deuce. The Archbishop, observing that there was trouble and confusion behind the scenes, inquired what was the cause of this. At the sound of the prelate's voice, a page, who played the *gracioso* of the piece, hurried forward and said to the archbishop —“ My lord, you need not fear any longer that the Moors will take prisoner the King of Leon. Thank Heaven! he has just made off with his royal robes.” “ Heaven be praised!” cried the Archbishop. “ He has done quite right to flee from the enemies of our religion, and to escape from the chains which they had prepared for him. No doubt he has returned to Leon, the capital of his kingdom. May he reach it without meeting with any misadventure! Moreover, I

<sup>1</sup> In the original *ni roi ni roc*; this last word is peculiar to the game of chess.

forbid any one to go in pursuit of him ; I should be sorry if his Majesty were to receive any annoyance on my account."

After having said these words, the prelate ordered my part to be read, and the play to be proceeded with.

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## CHAPTER XI.

### CONTINUATION OF SCIPIO'S STORY.

As long as I had money in my purse my host smiled on me, and was cap in hand to me ; but the instant he began to suspect that I had hardly any left, he gave me the cold shoulder, picked up a quarrel with me without rhyme or reason,<sup>1</sup> and requested me one fine morning to leave his house, and find a lodging elsewhere. I left him as proud as a peacock, and went into a church belonging to the Dominicans, where, whilst mass was being said, an old beggar came and asked for alms. I took out of my pocket two or three maravedis, which I gave him, say-

<sup>1</sup> In the original : *me fit une querelle d'Allemand*, literally "picked up a German quarrel with me" ; because, says Richelet in his *Dictionnaire*, "the Germans generally get angry very quick, but, otherwise, are *fort bonnes gens et fort honnêtes gens*." It is also sometimes argued that *Allemand* ought to be written *Alleman*, the name of a noble, numerous, and powerful family in the Dauphiné, of which all the members took up the quarrel of one of their number."



ing at the same time—"Friend, pray Heaven to send me soon a good situation. If your prayer be heard, you shall not repent having made it; rely on my gratitude."

At these words the beggar looked at me very attentively, and replied with a serious air—"What sort of place would you like?" "I should like," I replied, "to be a footman in some family where I would be comfortable." He asked me if I was in a hurry. "I could not be more so," I said; "for unless I am fortunate enough to get soon a place, there will be no other alternative for me but to die of hunger, or to become one of your fraternity." "If you were reduced to that necessity," he answered, "it would be a bad thing for you, as you are not used to our ways; but if you were to become accustomed to them, you would prefer our life to service, which is, undoubtedly, worse than a beggar's profession. However, as you prefer service to leading a free and independent life like me, you shall have a situation at once. I may look wretched, but I can be useful to you, and I will set to work this very day. Meet me here to-morrow at the same hour; and I will let you know what I have done."

I took care to keep the appointment, and returned the next day to the same place, where I had not been long before the beggar came up and bade me take the trouble to follow him.

I did so, and he led me to a cellar not far from the church, where he dwelt. We both entered, and sitting down on a long bench which had seen at least a hundred years' service, he said—"A good action always meets with its reward. Yesterday you gave me alms, and that has determined me to find you a situation; for which, God willing, you shall not have long to wait. I know an old Dominican, by name Father Alexis, who is a holy friar, and a great confessor. I have the honour to be his messenger, and I acquit myself of this office with so much tact and fidelity, that he consents to use his influence for me and my friends. I have spoken to him about you, and he is inclined to assist you. I shall present you to his reverence, whenever you like."

"There is not a moment to lose," I said to the old beggar, "let us go at once to visit this good monk." The mendicant did not refuse, but took me immediately to Father Alexis, whom we found busy in his room, writing spiritual letters. He stopped his work to speak to me, and said that, at the request of the beggar, he was willing to interest himself on my behalf. "Having learned," he continued, "that Señor Balthazar Velasquez wants a lackey, I wrote to him this morning on your behalf, and he has just replied that he will receive you implicitly on my recommendation. You may call on him to-day; I am his confessor and friend." There-

upon the monk preached to me for three-quarters of an hour on the necessity of doing my duty, particularly enlarging on my obligation of serving Velasquez zealously ; after which he assured me that he would take care and keep me in my situation, provided my master had no fault to find with me.

After thanking the friar for his kindness, I left the monastery with the beggar, who told me that Señor Balthazar Velasquez was a rich old woollen-draper, but a simple, kind-hearted man. "I have no doubt," he added, "that you will be perfectly comfortable in his house, which, in your place, I should prefer to a nobleman's." I inquired the way to his place of residence, and went there at once, after promising the beggar to recompense his good offices, as soon as I should be settled in my situation. I entered a shop, where two well-dressed young shopmen were walking up and down, and giving themselves airs, whilst waiting for customers. I asked if their master was at home, telling them that I came to see him from Father Alexis. At this venerable name they showed me into a shop parlour, where the tradesman was turning over the leaves of a large ledger lying on his desk. I bowed to him respectfully, and said ; "Sir, I am the young man whom the reverend Father Alexis has recommended to you as a servant." "Ah ! my lad," he replied, "you are welcome. It is

enough for me that that holy man has sent you, and I shall receive you into my service, in preference to three or four other footmen who have been recommended to me. It is settled; your wages begin from to-day."

I had no need to be long with this citizen to be convinced that he was just such a man as had been described to me. Indeed, he seemed so very simple that I could not help thinking I should find it very difficult to abstain from playing him some trick. He had been a widower four years, and had two children, a son of five-and-twenty, and a daughter a little more than ten. The daughter, brought up by a strict duenna, and under the spiritual guidance of Father Alexis, was walking in the path of virtue; but her brother, Gaspard Velasquez, though no pains had been spared to make him an honest man, had all the vices of a young profligate. He sometimes was away from home for two or three days; and, if when he came back, his father ventured to remonstrate with him, Gaspard silenced the old man, by adopting a loftier tone than his father's.

"Scipio," the old man said to me one day, "I have a son who is the plague of my life. He is steeped into all kinds of debauchery, and, yet I cannot account for it, for his education has not been neglected. I have given him excellent masters; and Father Alexis, my friend, has done his utmost to train him up in



the way he should go ; but alas ! he could not succeed. Gaspard pursues a career of profligacy. You will, perhaps, say that I treated him with too much indulgence in his youth, and that this has been the cause of his ruin. But no ; he was punished when I thought it right to be strict ; for, though I am easy-going, I can be firm when occasion requires. I have even had him locked up in a house of correction ; but that only made him worse. In a word, his is one of those bad dispositions which neither good example, remonstrances, nor punishments can correct. Heaven alone can perform such a miracle.”

If I was not greatly moved by the grief of the unhappy father, at least I pretended to be. “How much you are to be pitied, sir,” I said ; “A good man like you deserves to have a better son.” “What would you have, my dear fellow ?” he replied ; “Heaven has thought fit to deprive me of this consolation. Among the many grounds of complaint against Gaspard, I will tell you in confidence that there is one which makes me very uneasy ; and this is his desire to rob me, and the fact that he only too often finds means to do so, in spite of my vigilance. The servant, who was your predecessor, had a secret understanding with him, and that was why I sent him away. As for you, I trust you will not allow my son to tamper with your honesty ; but that you will

espouse my interests. I have no doubt that Father Alexis has fully enjoined you to do so.” “I assure you that he has,” I said; “his reverence lectured me for a good hour to think only of your advantage; but I can assure you that his exhortation was not needed; I feel inclined to serve you faithfully; and, in short, I promise to do it with a zeal proof against every temptation.”

He who hears but one side does not hear anything at all. Young Velasquez, who was a complete fribble, judging from my looks that I should be no harder to seduce than my predecessor, drew me aside into a snug corner and spoke to me as follows—“Listen, my dear fellow; I am convinced my father has asked you to be a spy on me; he is sure to have done it. But take care; I warn you that that business is not without its unpleasantness. If ever I perceive that you watch me, I will cudgel you to death; but if you will help me to deceive my father, you may expect everything from my gratitude. Do you wish me to deal with you more clearly? You shall have a share in the hauls we make together. Therefore, take your choice; declare this instant for the father or the son; I give no quarter!”

“Sir,” I replied, “you press me very closely;<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> In the original, *vous me serrez furieusement le bouton*, “you clasp very tightly the leathern buckle which holds the reins together.”

I plainly see that I shall not be able to avoid being on your side, though in my heart I feel a reluctance to deceive Señor Velasquez." "You need make no scruple about that," replied Gaspard; "he is an old miser who wants to keep me still in leading strings; a wretch who refuses me what is necessary, by refusing to supply me with money for my pleasures; for pleasures are the necessities of life at the age of five-and-twenty. You must look at my father from this point of view." "There is an end of it, sir," said I; "there is no holding out against such a just cause of complaint. I declare for you, and offer to assist your praiseworthy enterprises; but let us both take especial care to conceal our mutual understanding, lest your faithful assistant be turned out of doors. It seems to me that you will not do amiss to pretend to hate me, and to talk to me in an abusive manner before everybody; your expressions need not at all be nice. A few boxes on the ear, even, and a few kicks will do no harm. On the contrary, the more aversion you show to me, the more confidence Señor Balthazar will have in me. For my part, I shall pretend to avoid talking to you. In waiting on you at table I shall seem to do so with pain; and whenever I shall mention your lordship's<sup>1</sup> name, do not take it ill if I say that hanging is

<sup>1</sup> The original has *votre seigneurie*, an example not given in Vol. i., INTRODUCTORY NOTICE, pages xxxvii. and xxxviii.

too good for you. You shall see that everyone in the house will be taken in by this conduct, and will believe us to be mortal enemies."

"Zounds!" exclaimed young Velasquez at these last words, "I admire you, my friend! You show a wonderful genius for intrigue at your age; I draw thence the happiest omen for myself. I hope with the help of your intelligence not to leave my father a single pistole." "You do me too much honour," I said, "to rely so much on my capacity; I shall do all I can to justify the good opinion you have of me; and if I cannot succeed, it shall not be my fault."

I was not long in showing Gaspard that I was the very man he needed; and this was the first service I rendered him. Balthazar's strong box was in the good man's chamber, by his bedside, and served him as a sort of oratory to say his prayers. Whenever I looked that way my eyes glistened, and I often said to it, when I was alone—"Friendly strong-box, will you always be closed to me? Shall I never have the pleasure of beholding the wealth you conceal?" As I went into the chamber whenever I pleased, and as only Gaspard was forbidden to enter it, it happened one day that I saw his father, believing himself to be unobserved, open and shut the strong-box, and hide the key behind some hangings. I took particular



notice of the spot, and mentioned the discovery to my young master, who, embracing me joyfully, said—"Ah my dear Scipio, what news have you brought me! Our fortune is made, my lad. I shall give you some wax to-day; and you will take an impression of the key, and put it into my hands. There will be no difficulty in finding an obliging locksmith in Cordova, which is not the Spanish town wherein there are fewest rogues."

"But," observed I to Gaspard, "why should you have a second key made when we can use the original one?" "You are right," he replied, "but I am afraid that my father, through distrust or from some other motive, may take it into his head to hide it elsewhere; and the safest way is to have one of our own." I approved of his caution, and coming over to his opinion got everything ready to take an impression of the key; which was done one fine morning, while my old master was paying a visit to Father Alexis, with whom he generally had very long conversations. I did not stop there, but used the key to open the strong-box, which, being full of large and small bags, threw me into a delightful perplexity. I did not know which to choose, so much affection did I feel for the whole lot of them. However, as the risk of being caught did not admit of any long examination, I seized one of the biggest at random. Then, having locked

the box and replaced the key behind the hangings, I left the room with my booty, which I hid in a small wardrobe, until I could hand it over to young Velasquez, who was waiting for me in a house where he had appointed to meet me. I quickly joined him, and told him what I had just done. He was so pleased with me that he overwhelmed me with caresses, and generously offered me half the contents of the bag; which, however, I refused. "No, no, sir," I said, "this first bag is yours alone; use it for your necessities. I shall forthwith return to that strong-box, where, thank Heaven, there is money enough for us both." Accordingly, three days afterwards I carried off a second bag, containing, like the first, five hundred crowns, of which I would only accept a fourth part, notwithstanding the pressing entreaties of Gaspard to share them with him like a brother.

As soon as the young man saw himself so well off, and thus in a position to gratify his passion for women and gambling, he was unlucky enough to fall desperately in love with one of those well-known ladies of gallantry who devour and swallow up the greatest estates in a short period. For her he launched out into frightful expense, which compelled me to pay so many visits to the strong-box, that old Velasquez at length perceived that he was being robbed. "Scipio," he said to me one

morning, "I must tell you what I know to be true. Somebody robs me, my friend. My strong-box has been opened, and several bags have been taken out; I am certain of it. Whom must I accuse of this theft; or rather, who but my son can have done it? Gaspard must have secretly entered my room, or else you yourself have brought him in; for I am tempted to believe that you have an understanding with each other, although you seem to be on such bad terms. However," he added, "I am unwilling to listen to this suspicion, since Father Alexis has answered for your fidelity." I replied that other people's property, thank Heaven, did not tempt me, and I accompanied this falsehood with a hypocritical grimace which stood me instead of an apology.

So the old man said no more to me about it; still, for all that, he included me in his suspicions; and, as a precaution against our attacks, he had a new lock put on his strong-box, and always carried the key in his pocket. Thus all intercourse was broken off between us and the bags, and we were greatly non-plussed, especially Gaspard, who, being unable any longer to spend the same amount on his nymph, dreaded that he should be obliged to give up visiting her. However, he was intelligent enough to think of a plan which kept him going for a few days. This ingenious

expedient was to appropriate, by way of a loan, my entire share of the plunder of the strong-box. I gave it him, to the last coin ; which, it seems to me, may be considered as a restitution beforehand, made by me to the old man in the person of his heir.

The young man, when he had come to the end of this resource and considered that he had no other, fell into a profound melancholy, which gradually unhinged his reason. He only regarded his father as a man who was the bane of his life. He gave way to the most violent despair ; and, unrestrained by the ties of nature, the wretch conceived the horrible design of poisoning his father. Not content with confiding this execrable project to me, he even proposed that I should become the instrument of his vengeance. At this proposal I was thunderstruck with horror. " Sir," I said to him, " is it possible you are so abandoned by Heaven as to have formed this abominable resolution ? What ! are you capable of killing the author of your existence ? Are we to see in Spain, in the bosom of Christianity, a crime committed, at the very idea of which the most barbarous nations would recoil with horror ! No, my dear master," I added, throwing myself at his feet, " no, you will not commit a deed which would incense the whole world against you, and which would be followed by a shameful punishment."



I employed many other arguments beside to dissuade Gaspard from such a guilty undertaking. I do not know whence I got all the syllogisms which I used to combat his despair; but it is certain that I spoke to him like a doctor of Salamanca, though I was a mere stripling and the son of La Coscolina. But it was useless to tell him that he ought to return to a better mind, and bravely cast aside the hateful thoughts by which he was assailed. All my eloquence was in vain. He dropped his head on his breast, and maintaining a sullen silence, whatever I might do or say, he led me to conclude that he would not swerve from his purpose.

Thereupon, I made up my mind, and, determined to reveal everything to my old master, asked him for a private interview; he granted it, and when we were alone together I said—"Sir, let me throw myself at your feet, and implore your mercy." With these words I fell down before him in deep emotion, with my face bathed in tears. The old man, surprised by my act and the disorder of my looks, asked me what I had done. "I have committed a crime of which I repent," I answered, "and for which I shall reproach myself all my life; I have been weak enough to listen to your son, and help him to rob you." I then made a sincere confession of all that had occurred; after which I gave him an account of the con-

versation which I had just had with Gaspard, whose plan I revealed to him, without omitting the slightest circumstance.

Whatever bad opinion old Velasquez had of his son, he could scarcely believe my words. Nevertheless, not doubting that my information was true, he said, as he raised me from the ground, for I was still prostrate at his feet—“Scipio, I pardon you, on account of the important communication which you have just made to me. Gaspard!” he continued, raising his voice, “Gaspard seeks to kill me! Oh! ungrateful son! monster! better you had been stifled at your birth than permitted to live to become a parricide. What reason have you to attempt my life? I allow you every year a reasonable sum for your pleasures, and you are not satisfied! Will you, then, not be content, unless I allow you to ruin your sister and squander all my wealth?” After this painful appeal he enjoined me not to say a word to any one, and bade me leave him alone, to consider what he ought to do in so delicate a conjuncture.

I was very anxious to know what resolution this unhappy father was going to take. That very day, he sent for Gaspard, and, without letting him see his inward emotions, spoke to him as follows:—“My son, I have received a letter from Merida, informing me that, if you are disposed to marry, you can obtain the hand of a very lovely girl of fifteen who will

bring you a large dowry. If you have no objection to marry, we will set out to-morrow at day-break for Merida, where we shall see the lady who has been proposed for you; if she is to your liking you will marry her, and if she is not, we shall speak no more about this alliance." Gaspard, hearing a large dowry mentioned, and fancying himself already in possession of it, replied without hesitation that he was ready to undertake the journey. So they set out next day at sunrise, without attendants, and mounted on good mules.

When they were in the mountain-district of Fesira, and in a spot as much favoured by robbers as it was dreaded by travellers, Balthazar dismounted, telling his son to do the same. The young man obeyed, and asked why he was made to dismount in such a place. "I will tell you the reason presently," replied the old man, darting at him a look of mingled grief and anger. "We are not going to Merida, and the marriage of which I have spoken to you is but an invention of mine in order to bring you hither. I do not ignore, ungrateful and unnatural son, the crime which you meditate; I am aware that a poison, prepared by you, was to have been administered to me; but, mad as you are, could you flatter yourself that you would take my life by such means, with impunity? You are mistaken! Know that your crime would be at once discovered, and that you would die

by the hand of the executioner. There is a safer way of satiating your rage, without exposing yourself to an ignominious death," he continued. "We are here without witnesses, and in a spot where murders are committed every day. Since you are thirsting so eagerly for my blood, plunge your dagger into my breast, and the murder will be set down to brigands." After having said these words, Balthazar, baring his breast, and pointing to his heart, added—"Now, Gaspard, strike the deadly blow here, to punish me for having begotten such a wretch as you !"

Young Velasquez, thunderstruck by these words and far from trying to justify himself, suddenly fell senseless at his father's feet. The good old man, seeing him in a condition which looked like a beginning of repentance, could not help yielding to paternal weakness. He hastened to his assistance ; but Gaspard no sooner recovered consciousness, than, unable to endure the presence of a father so justly offended, he exerted himself to rise ; and quickly mounting his mule, departed without saying a word. Balthazar let him go, and leaving him to his remorse, returned to Cordova, where six months afterwards he learned that his son had entered the Carthusian monastery at Seville, there to spend the remainder of his life in penance.



## CHAPTER XII.

## THE CONCLUSION OF SCIPIO'S HISTORY.

BAD example sometimes produces good results. The conduct of young Velasquez made me reflect seriously upon my own. I began to struggle against my thievish propensities, and to live like an honest lad. My habit of pouncing upon all the money I could lay hands on, had been formed by so many repeated acts, that it was not easily overcome. And yet I was in hopes of curing myself of it, having often heard it said that, to become virtuous, a man has nothing to do but to desire it sincerely. So I undertook this great work, and Heaven seemed to bless my efforts; I ceased to cast longing eyes upon the old merchant's strong-box; I verily believe that, even if I had had a chance of extracting the bags, I should not have availed myself of it. Nevertheless, I will admit that it would have been rash to put my incipient integrity to such a proof; and Velasquez took good care not to do so.

Don Manriquez de Medrana, a young gentleman, and knight of the Order of Alcantara, used often to come to our house. He dealt with us, and was one of our most aristocratic, if not one of our best customers. I was fortunate enough to please this gentleman, who,

whenever he met me, always drew me into conversation, and seemed to listen to me with pleasure. "Scipio," he said to me one day, "if I had a servant of your disposition, I should think I had found a treasure; if you were not in the service of a man whom I esteem, I should spare no pains to entice you away." "Sir," I replied, "you would have little difficulty in succeeding, for I am partial to gentlemen of rank; it is my weakness; their free and easy manners fascinate me." "In that case," replied Don Manriquez, "I shall ask Señor Balthazar to turn you over from his service into mine; he will scarcely refuse me that favour." And in fact Velasquez consented, the more readily because he did not think the loss of a knavish servant irretrievable. And on my part I was very glad of the change, a tradesman's valet appearing to me but a poor fellow in comparison with the valet of a knight of Alcantara.

To give you a faithful portrait of my new master, I may tell you that he was a very handsome gentleman, who pleased everybody by his affability and sound understanding. Moreover, he was a man of great merit and integrity, who lacked nothing but wealth. Being the younger son of a family more illustrious than opulent, he was obliged to live on the bounty of an old aunt residing at Toledo, who loved him as a son and provided him with the money

he needed. He was always neatly dressed, and everywhere well received. He visited the principal ladies in the town, and among others the Marchioness of Almenara, a widow of seventy-two years of age, who, by her engaging manners and her mental endowments, made her house the centre of attraction to all the nobility of Cordova. Men and women alike took pleasure in her conversation, and her house was called "the abode of good company."

My master was one of that lady's most regular attendants. One evening, coming home, after having just left her, he seemed to me more excited than usual. "Señor," said I, "you are evidently much agitated. May your faithful servant ask the reason of this, and has anything extraordinary happened to you?" The knight smiled at this question, and confessed that he was, indeed, engrossed by a serious conversation in which he had just been engaged with the Marchioness of Almenara. "I wish," said I, with a smile, "that this nymph of three score and ten had declared her love for you." "Don't jest," he replied; "I would have you know, my friend, that the marchioness is in love with me. 'Knight,' she said to me, 'I know that you are not very well off but that you are nobly born; I have a liking for you, and am resolved to marry you, in order to make you independent, as I am unable honourably to bestow on you my wealth in any

other way. I know that this marriage will make me ridiculous in the eyes of the world; that scandal will be very busy about me; and that I shall be thought an old fool anxious to be married again. No matter; I mean to despise such idle talk in order to make you happy. All that I fear is your reluctance to comply with my intentions.' That," pursued the knight, "is what the marchioness said to me. I was the more astonished because she is the most discreet and most sensible woman in Cordova; so I replied that I was surprised by her doing me the honour of offering me her hand, since she had always persisted in her resolution of remaining in a state of widowhood to the end. She rejoined that, having considerable wealth, she was glad to share it during her life with a man of honour whom she liked." "To all appearances, then, you are determined to make the leap?" said I. "Can you doubt it?" he replied. "The marchioness is immensely rich, and moreover affectionate and intelligent; I should be out of my mind to let such a good opening escape me."

I strongly approved of my master's intention to profit by such an excellent opportunity of making his fortune, and I even advised him to hasten matters, so greatly did I dread a change. Fortunately the lady had this affair still more at heart than I; and, far from neglecting it, she arranged things so well that



the preparations for her marriage were soon got over. When it became known in Cordova that the old marchioness of Almenara was about to marry the youthful Don Manriquez de Medrana, the wits began to make merry at the widow's expense; but it was in vain that they exhausted their sarcastic jests; they could not turn her from her purpose; she let the whole town talk as much as they pleased, and followed the knight to the altar. Their wedding was celebrated with a splendour which furnished fresh food for scandal. "The bride," it was said, "ought at least have had sufficient modesty and propriety to dispense with pomp and publicity, so unbecoming in old widows who marry young husbands."

The marchioness, instead of appearing ashamed of becoming at her age the wife of Don Manriquez, displayed without constraint the pleasure she felt at the circumstance. She gave a grand entertainment and concert, and the festivities ended with a ball, at which all the nobility of Cordova, of both sexes, were present. Towards the end of the ball the newly-married couple retired privately to an apartment, with only a maid and myself. This gave a fresh ground for the company to accuse the marchioness of having a warm temperament; but the lady's disposition was far different from what they all thought. As soon as she was alone with my master, she

said to him—"Don Manriquez, this is your room; mine is in another part of the house. We will pass the night in separate chambers; and in the day-time we will live as mother and son." At first the knight did not know what to make of this; he thought the lady spoke thus only to induce him to become more tender and impetuous; and thinking that he ought to appear impassioned, out of politeness, he approached her, and eagerly offered to assist her in her toilet; but, so far from permitting him to aid her, she pushed him back, and said, with a serious air—"Stay, Don Manriquez; if you take me for one of these amorous old ladies who marry a second time from mere incontinence, you are mistaken. I have not married you to make you purchase the advantages conferred upon you in our marriage-contract; they were freely bestowed because I like you; in return I only ask you to be my friend." With these words she left my master and myself in our room, and retired with her maid to her own apartment, forbidding the knight, in the most positive manner, to accompany her.

After her withdrawal, Don Manriquez and I remained very much confounded by what we had heard. "Scipio," said my master, "could you ever have anticipated what the marchioness has just said? What do you think of such a lady?" "I think, sir, that there is no

other woman like her in the world. How happy you must be to be married to her! It is like having a living without being obliged to perform the duties." "For my part," replied Don Manriquez, "I admire a wife of such an estimable character, and I mean to make her amends by every conceivable attention, for the sacrifice she makes to her delicacy." We continued talking of the lady, and then went to bed; I on a pallet in a dressing-room, and my master in a handsome bed which had been prepared for him, and in which, I fancy, in his inmost heart, he was not sorry to lie alone, though he might be sufficiently grateful to forget the age of such a generous wife.

The rejoicings were resumed next day, and the bride appeared in such good humour that she gave a fine opportunity to the sorry jesters. She was the first to laugh at what they said; and even encouraged them in their merriment, by entering cheerfully into the spirit of their jests. The knight, on his part, seemed no less satisfied than his spouse; and, from the tender manner in which he looked at her and spoke to her, any one would have thought that he had a predilection for old women. In the evening the newly married couple had a fresh conversation, in which it was decided that, without being a hindrance to each other, they should continue to live in the same manner as

they had lived before marriage. But this must be said in praise of Don Manriquez that, out of respect for his wife, he did what few husbands would have done in his place ; for he gave up a girl in the town whom he loved, and by whom he was beloved, not wishing to keep up a connection insulting to the feelings of a wife who had behaved so well towards him.

While he gave such strong marks of gratitude to this old lady, she repaid them with interest, although she was ignorant of them. She entrusted to him the key of her strong box, which was better lined than that of Velasquez. As she had reduced her household establishment during her widowhood, it was now placed again on the same footing as in the lifetime of her first husband. She increased the number of her servants, and filled her stables with horses and mules ; in a word, the most needy knight of the order of Alcantara became by her generosity and kindness the richest. You may, perhaps, ask me what I gained by all this. I received a present of fifty pistoles from my mistress, and one of a hundred from my master, who, moreover, made me his secretary, with a salary of four hundred crowns ; nay, he had so much confidence in me that he appointed me his treasurer."

"His treasurer !" I cried, interrupting Scipio at this point, and laughing heartily. "Yes sir," he replied, cool and serious, "his treasurer ;



and I venture to say that I acquitted myself of my duties with honour. True it is, that I may perhaps, be somewhat indebted to the cash account; for, as I took my wages in advance, and left the knight's service in a hurry, it is not impossible that the balance of my account may be on the wrong side. At all events, it is the last reproach that can be made against me, for I have ever since that time been upright and honest."

"Thus," continued the son of La Coscolina, "I was secretary and treasurer to Don Manriquez, who seemed as much pleased with me as I was with him; when he received a letter from Toledo, announcing that Donna Theodora Muscoso, his aunt, was at the point of death. He was so much affected by this news that he set out at once to go to that lady, who had been more than a mother to him for several years. I accompanied him on this journey, with only a valet and a footman; and the four of us, mounted on the best horses in our stables, travelled hastily to Toledo, where we found Donna Theodora in such a condition as to warrant the hope that her illness would not prove fatal. And, indeed, our opinions, though contrary to the one held by an old physician who attended her, were not contradicted by the result.

While the health of our good aunt was visibly improving, perhaps less through the

remedies given than in consequence of her dear nephew's presence, the worthy treasurer passed his time as pleasantly as possible, with some young fellows whose acquaintance was well calculated to provide him with opportunities of spending his money. Not to mention the gallant entertainments which they made me give to the ladies to whom they introduced me, they enticed me sometimes to gambling-houses, where they induced me to play with them; and not being quite such a good player as my master Don Abel, I lost much oftener than I won. I gradually contracted an inclination for gambling, and so thoroughly had I given myself up to this passion, that it would doubtless have compelled me to draw from the cash-box a few quarters in advance, had not love fortunately saved both the cash-box and my virtue. One day, as I was passing the Church *de los Reyes*,<sup>1</sup> I saw through a lattice of which

<sup>1</sup> This church *de los Reyes* is described by the Countess d'Aulnoy in the thirteenth letter of her *Relation*, dated August 30, 1679, as "beautiful and large, quite filled with lofty orange trees, pomegranate trees, jessamines, and myrtles." In it are also "painted and gilded cages, filled with nightingales, canaries, and other birds which make a charming concert. . . . The walls of this church are all covered outside with the chains and fetters of the captives who have been ransomed from Barbary." Mr Clark, who visited Spain in 1849, says, in his *Gazpacho*, ch. x.—"The church of S. Juan de los Reyes stands at the north-western corner of the city (Toledo), towering among ruins. . . . As the name imports, it was one of the truly royal thankofferings of the Catholic sovereigns. The outside, which is somewhat devoid of architectural ornament, is garnished by festoons of chains, more or less rusty and broken. These are

the curtains were drawn, a young girl who seemed to me less like a mortal than a divinity. I would use a still stronger expression, if there were one, to give you a better idea of the impression which her appearance produced upon me. I wanted to find out everything about her, and by dint of diligent inquiries learned that her name was Beatrix, and that she was maid to Donna Julia, the youngest daughter of the Count of Polan.

Beatrix here interrupted Scipio by laughing heartily. Then, addressing my wife, she said—

the chains which were used to bind Christian captives in the dungeons of Ronda, and (after the old pagan fashion) were hung round the newly erected church as a trophy of the faith's triumph. . . . The walls (internally) are covered with fabulous animals—rampant, couchant, and passant—amid bowers of impossible foliage, while no occasion is lost to introduce the device of the royal pair, a yoke and sheaf of arrows, tied in a true love knot. The church of S. Juan de los Reyes used to be familiar to the readers of *Gil Blas*, but recent editions have misprinted it 'Royes,' and a commentator mistaking it for Royos, gravely explains it to mean 'the church of the *red* friars,' an order, I apprehend, till now unheard of in ecclesiastical history." I may add that in some French editions of *Gil Blas*, "Royes" is explained in a note to mean "*black* friars." M. A. J. C. Hare, who visited Toledo in the beginning of 1872, says, in his *Wanderings in Spain*, that "almost on the edge of the steep cliff which overhangs the Tagus, is the Franciscan convent of San Juan de los Reyes, with its beautiful church, built by Ferdinand and Isabella in memory of their victory at Toro. It will at once attract attention, not only from its Gothic architecture, but from its being hung all over with the links of the chains of Christian captives rescued at the conquest of the Moors. . . . Latterly nature has added much to the charm of the cloisters, and jessamine and honeysuckle form natural crowns around its saint-statues." See also vol. i., INTRODUCTORY NOTICE, p. xxxiv., *e*.

“Charming Antonia, do but just glance at me, and tell me whether you think I look like a divinity?” “You did, then, to my eyes,” said Scipio; “and as I no longer suspect your fidelity, you seem to me lovelier than ever.” After this pretty compliment, my secretary thus resumed his story—

This discovery was all that was needed to inflame me, though not, it is true, with a love that could be acknowledged. I frankly confess it; I thought I should easily overcome her virtue, if I tempted her with presents of a nature to move her; but I judged the chaste Beatrix wrongly. It was no use employing women in my pay, to offer her my purse and my affection; she rejected my proposals with disdain. Her resistance, instead of extinguishing my desires, stimulated them; and I had recourse to a last expedient, and offered her my hand, which she accepted when she was told that I was the secretary and treasurer of Don Manriquez. As we saw fit to conceal our marriage for some time, we were secretly united in the presence of Dame Lorenza Sephora, the duenna of Seraphina, and before a few other attendants of the Count of Polan. After our union Beatrix contrived opportunities of seeing me in the daytime, and of allowing me to converse with her by night in the garden, where I let myself in by a small gate of which she gave me the key. Never were man and



wife more charmed with each other than we. Beatrix and I awaited the hour of our meeting with equal impatience, and hastened to it with the same eagerness; and the moments which we passed together, though they were sometimes numerous enough, seemed to us always too few. In short, we lived rather as lovers than as a married couple; but jealous fortune soon disturbed our felicity.

One night, as fatal for me as the former ones had been delightful, I was surprised, when I entered the garden, to find the little gate open. This unwonted circumstance alarmed me, and I interpreted it as a bad omen; I grew pale and trembled, as if I felt a presentiment of what was about to happen; and advancing in the dark to an arbour, where I usually used to meet my wife, I heard a man's voice. I stopped suddenly to hear more distinctly what was said, when my ear was at once greeted by the following words—"Do not keep me languishing in suspense, my dear Beatrix! Complete my happiness, and remember that your own fortune depends upon it." Instead of waiting patiently to learn more, I thought there was no occasion to hear anything further. Maddened by jealousy, and thinking only of vengeance, I drew my sword, and without hesitation rushed into the arbour. "Cowardly seducer!" I cried, "whoever you are, you shall take my life before you deprive me of my

honour.” With these words on my lips, I attacked the gentleman who was talking to Beatrix. He quickly assumed the defensive, and fought like a man much better acquainted with the art of fencing than myself, who had only received a few lessons at Cordova. However, good swordsman as he was, he could not parry a thrust I made, or else his foot slipped. I saw him fall; and fancying that I had mortally wounded him, fled in all haste, without deigning to answer Beatrix, who loudly called to me to stop.

“Yes, indeed,” Scipio’s wife interrupted, turning to us, “I called him in order to undeceive him. The gentleman conversing with me in the arbour was Don Ferdinand de Leyva. That nobleman, who was in love with my mistress Julia, had resolved to carry her off, thinking this the only way of obtaining her hand; I had appointed to meet him in the garden, to concert measures for the elopement, on which he was telling me my fortune depended. But it was no use screaming to call my husband back. Blinded by anger he rushed from me as though I were faithless to him.”

“In the state of mind I was in at the time,” continued Scipio, “I was capable of anything. Those persons who know by experience what jealousy is, and to what extravagances it carries even the best regulated minds, will not be astonished at the disorder which it produced

in my weak brain. I passed in a moment from one extreme to another, and felt hatred succeed to those sentiments of affection which I had entertained an instant before for my wife. I swore to abandon her, and to banish her for ever from my memory. Besides, I thought that I had killed a nobleman; and under that idea, fearing to fall into the hands of justice, I experienced that fatal anxiety which everywhere pursues, like an avenging Nemesis, a man who has committed a wicked deed. In this dreadful conjuncture, thinking only of my escape, I did not return home, but left Toledo immediately, with no other possessions than the clothes on my back. It is true I had about sixty pistoles in my pocket, which was a fair provision for a young man resolved to pass all his life in service.

I walked all night, or rather I ran: for the thought of the alguazils, never absent from my mind, continually lent me new vigour. Dawn overtook me between Rodillas<sup>1</sup> and Maqueda. When I came to the latter borough, and feeling rather tired, I went into the church, which was just opened; and, after offering up a prayer, sat down on a bench to rest. I began musing on the state of my affairs, which was quite sufficient to engross my thoughts, but I

<sup>1</sup> This town is also mentioned in Donna Mencía's history (vol. i. bk. i. ch. xi. p. 73). See also vol. i. INTRODUCTORY NOTICE, p. xxxix., *g*.

had no time to indulge in many reflections. I heard three or four smacks of a whip, which resounded through the church, and concluding that a muleteer was passing by, I immediately got up, and went to see whether it was a mistake. On reaching the church door I saw a man mounted on a mule, and leading two others disengaged. "Stop, friend," I said, "whither are these mules going?" "To Madrid," he replied. "I have been conveying to this town two good Dominican friars from that city, and am now on my way back."

Such an opportunity of making a journey to Madrid inspired me with a wish to go there; I struck a bargain with the muleteer, mounted one of his mules, and, then, we pushed on to Illescas, where we were to sleep. Hardly had we left Maqueda behind us, when the muleteer, a man from thirty-five to forty, began to sing the church service in a loud voice. He commenced with the prayers which the canons say at matins; then he chanted the Belief, as it is sung at high mass; then, going on to vespers, he went through them, not sparing me the *Magnificat*. Though the rascal stunned me with his noise I could not help laughing; and even encouraged him to continue, when he was obliged to stop for breath. "Courage, my friend," said I, "go on. If Heaven has given you good lungs, you do



not make a bad use of them." "For that matter, I don't," he cried; "thank Heaven, I am not like most carriers, who sing nothing but obscene or profane songs. I never even sing the ballads about our wars against the Moors; for if such songs are not licentious, you will at least agree with me that they are frivolous, and that a good Christian ought not to be engrossed in them." "You have a purity of heart," I replied, "rarely found in muleteers; but tell me, my friend, with this excessive squeamishness of yours in the selection of your songs, have you also taken a vow of continence with regard to the young servant-girls of the inns?" "Certainly," he rejoined; "continence is also a virtue I pride myself on in places of that sort. When I am in such houses I only think of looking after my mules." I was not a little astonished to hear this phenix of muleteers speak in this fashion; so that, looking upon him as an honest and sensible man, I entered into conversation with him when he had sung to his heart's content.

We reached Illescas late in the day. When we were in the inn, I left my companion to look after the mules, and made my way to the kitchen, where I bade the landlord prepare us a good supper; which he promised to do, so much to my satisfaction, as to make me remember all my life that I had been staying in his house. "Ask your muleteer," he added,

“ what sort of man I am. By the Heavens above ! I defy all the cooks in Madrid and Toledo to make an *olla podrida* like mine. I shall regale you this evening with some young rabbit jugged, after a receipt of my own ; you shall then see if I am wrong to boast of my skill.” Thereupon, pointing to a saucepan in which he said there was a rabbit ready cut up, he continued : “ That is what I mean to give you for supper, as well as a roast shoulder of mutton. When I shall have put some pepper and salt, some wine, and a handful of sweet herbs into the pan, with a few other ingredients which I use in my sauces, I hope to dish you up a stew fit for a lord high-treasurer.”<sup>1</sup>

After having thus blown his own trumpet, the landlord began to prepare supper. Whilst he was thus employed, I entered another room, and there, lying down on a pallet, I fell fast asleep through fatigue, having had no rest the night before. In a couple of hours the muleteer came and awoke me, saying—“ Sir, your supper is ready ; please come to table.” In the dining-room the cloth was laid for two ; the muleteer and I sat down, and the stew was brought in. I fell upon it eagerly, and found the flavour excellent, either because hunger made me judge it too favourably, or because of the cook’s ingredients. Next, a joint of roast mutton was

<sup>1</sup> The original has *contador mayor*. Llorente is indignant because Lesage had, by mistake, written here *cantador mayor*.

served up; and perceiving that the muleteer only did justice to this last dish, I asked him why he had not taken his share of the other. He answered with a smile that he did not like anything jugged. This reply, or rather the smile with which he accompanied it, struck me as mysterious. "You are concealing from me," said I, "the real reason of your not eating this stew; be good enough to tell me." "Since you are curious to know it," he rejoined, "I will tell you that I have been loth to fill my stomach with such kinds of stews, ever since they served me one evening, at an inn on the road from Toledo to Cuença, a hash of domestic cat instead of a wild rabbit. That sickened me of stews."

As soon as the muleteer had said this, my appetite suddenly failed, in spite of the hunger which raged within me. I fancied I had just been eating a mock-rabbit, and I could not look at the stew without a wry face. My companion did not reassure me by saying that Spanish landlords, as well as pastry-cooks, pretty often made such mistakes. You may perceive that this observation was very consoling, so I had no more inclination to return to the jugged rabbit, nor even to touch the roast-meat, lest the sheep should be no more genuine than the cony. I rose from table cursing the stew, the inn, and the landlord; and going to bed again, I spent the night

more quietly than I might have expected. Early next morning, after paying the landlord as handsomely as if I had been treated like a prince, I left Illescas, with my imagination still so full of the juggled rabbit, that I took every animal I met on the road for a cat.

We reached Madrid early, and there, after having settled with my muleteer, I hired a furnished lodging near the Sun Gate. Though I was accustomed to look at people of quality, my eyes were nevertheless dazzled by the crowd of noblemen who are generally to be seen in the neighbourhood of the Court. I admired the vast number of carriages, and the multitude of gentlemen, pages, and footmen, in the retinue of the grandees. My admiration was increased when, having gone to the King's morning reception, I saw that monarch surrounded by his courtiers. I was delighted with the sight, and said to myself—"What splendour! What grandeur! I am no longer surprised at what I have heard: that a person must see the court at Madrid before he can conceive all its magnificence. I am overjoyed to have gone hither, and have a presentiment that there I shall pick up something." However, I picked up nothing, but made a few useless acquaintances; I gradually spent my money, and was, at last, only too happy to bestow myself, with all my merits, on a pedagogue from Salamanca, whom some family matter had brought to Madrid,



where he was born, and with whom I got acquainted by accident. I became his factotum, and followed him to his university when he returned thither.

My new patron was called Don Ignacio de Ipigna. He took the "don" inasmuch as he had been tutor to a duke, who settled upon him a pension for life, out of gratitude. This was not his entire income; for he had another pension as *emeritus* professor of his college; and in addition to all this, he received annually from the public two or three hundred pistoles, for some books on dogmatic morality which he periodically got published. The way in which he wrote his books is well worth mentioning. The illustrious Don Ignacio spent most of the day in reading Hebrew, Greek, and Latin authors, and putting down on a piece of paper every apophthegm or brilliant thought which he met with. As these slips became filled, he got me to file them on a wire, in the form of a garland; and each garland made a volume. What a number of bad books we did make! Scarcely a month elapsed without our producing at least a couple of volumes; and presently the press groaned under their weight. What seemed most surprising, is that he published these compilations as novelties; and if the critics took it into their heads to attack the author for plagiarizing from

the ancients, he answered them with a haughty effrontery: *Furto lætamur in ipso*.<sup>1</sup>

He was also a great commentator, and was so erudite in his comments that he often wrote notes on things, not worthy of being noticed; just as on his slips of paper he sometimes put down most inappropriate passages from Hesiod and other authors. But, for all this, I profited by living with this pedagogue, and it would be ungrateful not to admit it. My handwriting became much improved by copying out his works; and if, by treating me more as a pupil than as a servant, he laboured to form my mind, he did not neglect my morals. "Scipio," he used to say to me, if he happened to hear that some servant or other had proved himself a rogue, "take good care, my lad, not to follow the bad example of that rascal. An attendant should serve his master with as much fidelity as zeal, and try to become virtuous by dint of work, if he is unhappy enough not to be so by nature." In a word, Don Ignacio lost no opportunity of leading me in the path of virtue; and his exhortations produced such a good effect upon me, that I never had the least temptation to play him a trick during the fifteen months I lived with him.

<sup>1</sup> "We are proud of the robbery itself." This sentence of Santeuil is taken from a poetic plea, addressed to the Academy of *Belles Lettres* in favour of Latin monumental inscriptions. See also vol i., INTRODUCTORY NOTICE, p. xxxii., note 3.

I have already said that Doctor Ipiña originally came from Madrid. He had a relative there, named Catalina, who was waiting-maid to the Prince's nurse. This maid, through whose intervention I afterwards got Señor de Santillana out of the tower of Segovia, intent on rendering a service to Don Ignacio, induced her mistress to ask the Duke of Lerma for a living for him. This minister procured his nomination to the archdeaconry of Grenada, which, being situated in conquered territory, is in the gift of the crown. We set out for Madrid as soon as we received this intelligence, as the doctor wished to thank his benefactresses before going to Grenada. I had more than one opportunity of seeing Catalina and of conversing with her. My merry disposition and easy manners pleased her; and as for me, I found her so much to my taste, that I could not help responding to the little proofs of friendship which she gave me; in short, we became attached to each other. Forgive me this fault, dear Beatrix; as I thought you faithless, such a mistake ought to shield me from your reproaches.

Meanwhile Doctor Don Ignacio prepared to leave for Grenada. His relative and I, frightened at the impending separation which menaced us, had recourse to an expedient which saved us. I pretended to be ill, complained of my head, complained of my chest,

and affected all the symptoms of a man overcome by every infirmity to be found in this world. My master called in a physician, which made me tremble; for I fancied this Hippocrates would perceive that I was not really ill; but fortunately, and just as though he were in league with me, he told me plainly, and after observing me closely, that my complaint was much more serious than had been supposed, and that, to all appearance, I should be confined to my room for a long time. The doctor, impatient to take possession of his preferment, did not think it expedient to delay his departure, and preferred to engage another servant to wait upon him. He contented himself with leaving me to the care of a nurse, to whom he gave a sum of money for the expenses of my funeral if I should die, or to pay me my wages if I should recover.

As soon as I knew that Don Ignacio had set out for Grenada, I was cured of all my pretended maladies. I got out of bed, dismissed my physician who had shown so much penetration, and sent away my nurse, who robbed me of more than half the money she ought to have given me. Whilst I was enacting this part, Catalina was playing another with Donna Anna de Guevara, her mistress. She gave that lady to understand that I had an admirable talent for intrigue, and suggested that I should be appointed one of her agents. The nurse, who, through



her hankering after wealth, was often engaged in lucrative enterprises, had need of such characters ; she received me amongst her servants, and soon put me to the proof. She entrusted me with certain business which required some skill ; and, vanity apart, I did not acquit myself badly ; so that she was as pleased with me as I had reason to be dissatisfied with her. The lady was so avaricious that she did not give me the slightest share of the fruits which she reaped though my industry and labours. She fancied that by punctually paying me my wages she was behaving liberally enough. This excess of avarice displeased me, and would soon have made me quit her service, had it not been for the affection of Catalina, who, becoming more impassioned every day, formally proposed to me that I should marry her.

“ Gently, my love ! ” I said to her, “ that ceremony cannot take place so soon ; I must first hear of the death of a young woman who has been beforehand with you, and whose husband I became, as a punishment for my sins.” “ Nothing of the kind,” replied Catalina, “ I am not credulous enough to believe that story. You want to persuade me that you are married ; and why ? To hide politely from me your dislike to take me for your wife.” I protested to her that I spoke the truth, but in vain ; my frank confession seemed to her a subterfuge, and being offended, she

altered her conduct towards me. We did not quarrel; but our intercourse distinctly became cooler; henceforth, we behaved to each other in a strictly decorous and formal manner.

In the nick of time I learned that Señor Gil Blas de Santillana, secretary to the prime minister of the Spanish Crown, required a servant; and this post attracted me all the more, because it was reported to be one of the most agreeable situations which I could obtain. "Señor de Santillana," they told me, "is a gentleman of great merit, a favourite of the Duke of Lerma, and consequently sure to make his fortune. Moreover, he is of a generous disposition; so that, by attending to his interests, you will effectually improve your own." I did not neglect the opportunity; but went and presented myself to Señor Gil Blas, for whom I felt an inclination from the very first, and who engaged me on the mere recommendation of my looks. I did not hesitate to leave the nurse for him; and, if it please Heaven, I shall never have any other master.

Here Scipio ended his story. Then, addressing me, he said—"Señor de Santillana, I now have a few words to say to you. Do me the favour of assuring these ladies that you have always found me a faithful and zealous servant. I need your testimony to convince them that the son of La Coscolina has improved his

morals, and replaced his evil inclinations by virtuous sentiments.”

“Yes, ladies,” I said, “I can answer for this. If Scipio was a regular vagabond<sup>1</sup> in his youth, he has since then so thoroughly mended his ways, that he has become the model of a perfect servant. Far from having anything to reproach him with in his conduct, I must own that I am under great obligations to him. On the night when I was arrested and carried off to the tower of Segovia, he saved from pillage and placed in security a portion of my effects, which he might have appropriated with impunity. Nor was he content with preserving my property ; he came out of pure friendship and shut himself up with me in prison, preferring, to the charms of liberty, the melancholy pleasure of sharing my sorrows.”

<sup>1</sup> The original has *picaro*.





BOOK XI.



## CHAPTER I.

THE GREATEST PLEASURE GIL BLAS HAD EVER FELT,  
AND THE SAD ACCIDENT WHICH MARRED IT.  
THE CHANGES WHICH HAD TAKEN PLACE AT  
COURT, AND WHICH LED SANTILLANA TO  
RETURN THITHER.

I HAVE already said that Antonia and Beatrix agreed perfectly well; the one being accustomed to the duties of attending on a lady, and the other readily falling into the habit of acting as mistress of the house. Scipio and I were husbands too gallant and too much beloved by our wives, not to have very soon the satisfaction of becoming fathers; and the ladies showed an intention of increasing the population about the same time. Beatrix was the first to become a mother, and presented Scipio with a daughter; and a few days after Antonia filled us all with delight, by giving me a son. Overjoyed by this fortunate occurrence, I sent my secretary to Valencia to carry the news to the governor, who came to Lirias with Seraphina and the Marchioness of Pliego to become sponsors to the children, being pleased to add this mark of affection to all those which I had already received from him. This nobleman became the godfather of my son, and the Marchioness

his godmother, and he was christened Alphonso; the governor's wife, wishing that I should have the honour of being twice over her fellow-sponsor, was the godmother of Scipio's daughter, to whom we gave the name of Seraphina.

The birth of my son did not merely delight my own household; the inhabitants of Lirias also celebrated this event by festivities, showing that the whole village shared in the delight of its lord of the manor. But alas! our rejoicing was not of long duration, or rather it was suddenly changed to affliction, wailing, and lamentation, by a catastrophe which more than twenty years have not blotted from my memory, and which will always be present in my mind. My son died; and his mother, though she had perfectly recovered from her confinement, soon followed him to the grave; a violent fever carried off my dear wife within fourteen months of our marriage. Let the reader conceive, if it be possible, the grief with which I was overwhelmed. I fell into a state of apathetic dejection; and, through brooding over the loss which I had sustained, I seemed to become, as it were, insensible to everything. For five or six days I remained in this condition, and would not take any food; and I verily believe that, had it not been for Scipio, I should have died of hunger, or lost my reason entirely; but my clever secretary succeeded in overcom-



ing my grief by falling in with it. He contrived to make me take some broth, by offering it to me with such a sorrowful air, that he seemed to give it to me, less to preserve my life than to encourage my affliction.

This affectionate servant wrote to Don Alphonso to tell him of the misfortune which had happened, and the deplorable condition in which I was. That tender and compassionate nobleman, that generous friend, came in a very short time to Lirias. I cannot without emotion recall the moment when he first presented himself to my view. "My dear Santillana," he said, embracing me, "I am not come here to offer you any consolation; but to mourn for Antonia with you, as you would have mourned for Seraphina with me, had the hand of death snatched her from me." And, indeed, he burst into tears, and mingled his sighs with my own. Overcome as I was by my sorrow, I still felt very deeply the kindness of his lordship.

Don Alphonso had a long conversation with Scipio on the measures to be taken to subdue my grief. They thought it best to remove me for some time from Lirias, where everything continually brought back to my mind the image of Antonia. For this reason the son of Don Cæsar proposed to take me back with him to Valencia, and my secretary supported the proposal so strongly, that I accepted it. I left Scipio and his wife on the estate, where, in truth,

my stay only served to enhance my pangs, and took my departure with the governor. Whilst I was at Valencia, Don Cæsar and his daughter-in-law spared no pains to divert me from my sorrow, and they employed alternately all those amusements most calculated to distract my thoughts; but in spite of their exertions, I continued plunged in a state of melancholy from which they could not deliver me. Nor was it Scipio's fault either, that I did not regain my peace of mind; he often came from Lirias to Valencia to inquire after me; and he returned more gloomy or cheerful, according as he saw me more or less inclined to be consoled. I did not observe this without being pleased with it; I appreciated every sign of friendship which he displayed, and congratulated myself on having a servant so strongly attached to me.

One morning he entered my room. "Sir," said he, with a great deal of agitation, "there is a report in the town in which the whole kingdom is deeply interested; it is rumoured about that Philip III. is no more,<sup>1</sup> and that the Prince, his son, is upon the throne. It is added that the Cardinal-Duke of Lerma has lost his position; that he is even forbidden the court, and that Don Gaspard de Guzman, Count of Olivarez, is now Prime Minister."

<sup>1</sup> Philip the fourth ascended the Spanish throne in 1621. See vol. i., INTRODUCTORY NOTICE, p. xliii., *i*.

I felt somewhat moved by these tidings, without knowing why. Scipio perceived it, and asked me whether I did not feel any interest in this great change. "Why should I feel any interest in it, my dear fellow?" I rejoined "I have left the court, and all the changes which happen there, can make no difference to me."

"For a man of your time of life,"<sup>1</sup> replied the son of La Coscolina, "you are wonderfully weaned from the world! If I were in your place I should feel more or less curious to know what is going on." "Why should I feel curious?" I broke in. "On my word," he replied, "I should go to Madrid and show my face to the young King, to see whether he would remember me; I should certainly indulge in that pleasure." "I understand you," said I; "you would have me return to the court to try my fortune afresh, or rather to become once more covetous and ambitious." "Why should your morals again be corrupted?" replied Scipio. "Have more confidence in your virtue; I will go bail for you to yourself. The sound moral reflections, which your disgrace caused you to make upon the court, should not lead you to dread its dangers. Launch forth again boldly on a sea of which you know every shoal." "Hold your tongue, you flatterer!" I exclaimed with a smile, "are you

<sup>1</sup> See bk. ix., ch. iv., p. 120 note i.

tired of seeing me lead a quiet life? I thought you had a greater regard for my repose."

At this point in our conversation, Don Cæsar and his son entered. They confirmed the news of the King's death, as well as the disgrace of the Duke of Lerma. They told me, moreover, that this minister, having requested permission to withdraw to Rome, was not allowed to do so, but was ordered to repair to his marquisate of Denia. Then, as though they had been in collusion with my secretary, they advised me to go to Madrid, to show myself to the new King, as I was known to him, and had also rendered him such services as the great willingly are apt to reward. "For my part," said Don Alphonso, "I do not doubt that he will show his gratitude; Philip IV. is bound to pay the debts of the Prince of Spain." "I have the same presentiment," said Don Cæsar, "and I look on Santillana's visit to the court as an opportunity for his attaining a high position."

"Surely, gentlemen," I cried, "you do not consider what you are talking about! One would imagine, to hear you both, that I had only to go to Madrid to obtain the golden key,<sup>1</sup> or the governorship of some province;

<sup>1</sup> "The gentlemen of the King's Chamber at the Court of Spain," says the Countess d'Aulnoy, "wear a gold key as a mark of their dignity. There are three sorts of those keys, of which the first gives the right of entering and of exercising the duties of gentlemen of the King's Chamber; the second, the right of entering without performing such duties; and the third, the right of entering the antechamber."



but you are mistaken. I, on the contrary, am quite persuaded that the King would pay no attention to me, were I to present myself to him. I will put it to the proof, if you wish it, in order to disabuse you." The lords of Leyva took me at my word, so that I could not help promising them to set out for Madrid without loss of time. As soon as my secretary perceived that I had resolved to make this journey, he was filled with joy. He fancied that if I did appear before the new monarch, this Prince would single me out from the crowd, and load me with honours and wealth. Thereupon, indulging in the most brilliant ideas, he raised me to one of the highest positions in the State, and advanced his own lot on the strength of my preferment.

I accordingly made my arrangements for returning to court, not with a view of offering a new sacrifice at the shrine of fortune, but in order to convince Don Cæsar and his son, who got it into their heads that I should soon ingratiate myself with the sovereign. It is true that in my innermost heart I felt some desire to see whether the young Prince would recognise me. Impelled by this feeling of curiosity, without hope or intention for turning the new reign to my own advantage, I set out for Madrid, accompanied by Scipio, leaving Beatrix, who was a capital housekeeper, in charge of Lirias.

## CHAPTER II.

GIL BLAS GOES TO MADRID AND APPEARS AT COURT.

THE KING RECOGNISES HIM, AND RECOMMENDS HIM TO THE PRIME MINISTER. THE RESULTS OF THIS RECOMMENDATION.

WE reached Madrid in less than a week, Don Alphonso having given us two of his best horses, so that we might perform the journey more speedily. We alighted at a lodging house where I had previously lived, kept by Vincent Forrero, my old landlord, who was very glad to see me again.

As he was a man who prided himself on knowing all that was going on at court, as well as in the city, I asked him what was the best news. "There is a good deal of news," he replied. "Since the death of Philip III. the friends and partisans of the Cardinal Duke of Lerma have been moving Heaven and earth to maintain his Eminence in the ministry, but their efforts have been in vain; the Count of Olivarez has triumphed over them. It is asserted that Spain will lose nothing by the exchange, and that the new Prime Minister has a genius of so vast a scope that he would be capable of governing the whole world. Heaven grant it may be so! What is certain," he continued, "is that the public entertains the highest opinion of his

capacity. We shall see by-and-bye whether the Duke of Lerma's place has been filled up well or ill."

Forrero having once begun to talk, then gave me full particulars of all the changes which had taken place at court, since the Count of Olivarez had assumed the helm of the vessel of state.

Two days after my arrival in Madrid I went to the royal palace, in the afternoon, and put myself in the King's way, as he was going to his private apartments; but he did not look at me. I returned next day to the same place, and was no more successful. On the third day he cast his eyes on me as he passed, but he did not seem to pay more attention to me than to any other person. Thereupon, I made up my mind what was to be done, and said to Scipio, who accompanied me—"You see that the King does not recognise me, or, if he does recollect me, hardly cares to renew the acquaintance. I think we cannot do better than return to Valencia." "Let us not be in so great a hurry, sir," replied my secretary; "you know better than I that men only succeed at court by patience. Persevere in presenting yourself to the monarch; by frequently coming under his notice, he will be induced to look at you more closely, and to recall the features of his agent with the fair Catalina."

That Scipio might have nothing to reproach me with, I consented to act in the same way for three weeks; and at last, it happened one day, that the monarch, struck by the sight of me, sent for me. "Who are you?" said he; "your features seem not altogether strange to me. Where have I seen you?" "Sire," I replied, trembling, "I had the honour one night of escorting your Majesty with the Count of Lemos to . . ." "Ah! I remember," interrupted the Prince, "you were secretary to the Duke of Lerma; and if I am not mistaken, your name is Santillana. I have not forgotten that, on this occasion, you served me very zealously, and that you were rather ill rewarded for your pains. Were you not imprisoned on account of that adventure?" "Yes, Sire," I replied, "I was for six months in the tower of Segovia;<sup>1</sup> but you had the goodness to procure my release." "That," he replied, "does not cancel my debt to Santillana. It is not sufficient to have set you at liberty; I ought to consider myself indebted to you for the ills you have suffered out of affection for me."

Just as the King was uttering these words, the Count of Olivarez entered the room. Everything gives umbrage to a favourite. He

<sup>1</sup> Gil Blas told Don Alphonso de Leyva (see bk. ix. ch. x. page 175), that, after he had left the tower of Segovia, "not four months ago, he filled a rather important post at court."



was astonished to see a person there whom he did not know, and the King redoubled his surprise, by saying—"Count, I consign this young man<sup>1</sup> to your care; give him employment; I entrust to you the charge of his preferment." The Minister affected to receive this command in a most gracious manner, looking at me from head to foot, and much at a loss to know who I was. "Go, my friend," the monarch added, addressing himself to me, and beckoning me to withdraw; "the Count will not fail to employ you usefully in my service, and for your own interests."

I quitted the room at once, and went to meet the son of La Coscolina, who was in a state of the greatest anxiety to hear what the King had said to me. But observing a look of satisfaction on my face he remarked—"If I can believe my eyes, instead of returning to Valencia, we seem likely to remain at court." "That is not impossible," I replied; and then I delighted him by repeating word for word the short conversation I had just had with the monarch. "My dear master," said Scipio, in the excess of his joy, "will you complain of my predictions again?<sup>2</sup> Confess that you are not now displeased with me, for advising you to make a

<sup>1</sup> This "young man" was then over fifty. See vol. i., INTRODUCTORY NOTICE, p. xxvii.

<sup>2</sup> The original has *prenez-vous une autre fois de mes almanachs*, an expression found in Richelet's Dictionary.

journey to Madrid. I see you already appointed to some eminent post; you will become the Calderon of the Count of Olivarez." "I have not the least wish to fill such a position," I interrupted; "a place like that is surrounded by too many precipices to excite any desire in my mind. I should like a good situation where there should be no occasion to commit injustices, nor to carry on a shameful traffic in the favours of the monarch. After the use I made of my former influence, I cannot be too much on my guard against avarice and ambition." "Oh, sir," replied my secretary, "the minister will give you some handsome appointment which you may fill, without ceasing to be an honest man."

Induced by Scipio, rather than by my own anxiety, I went next day to the Count of Olivarez, before sunrise, having been informed that every morning, in summer and in winter, he gave audience by candle-light to all who wished to speak to him. I took my place modestly in a corner of the apartment, and from thence had a good look at the Count when he made his appearance; for I had paid little attention to him in the King's chamber. He was a man of more than middle height, and who might be thought stout in a country where it is a rarity to see any but lean people. His shoulders were so high that I thought he was hump-backed, though he was not so; his

very large head was inclined forward on his chest; his hair was black and lank, his face long, his complexion of an olive colour, his mouth sunken, and his chin sharp and turned upwards.

The aggregate did not constitute a handsome nobleman; nevertheless, as I fancied him to be well disposed towards me, I looked upon him with an indulgent eye, and even thought him nice. It is true that he received everyone with the utmost affability and complacency, and took the petitions presented to him with a graceful manner, which appeared to stand him in stead of a good presence. However, when in my turn I advanced to pay my respects to him and make myself known, he darted at me a stern and threatening look; then, turning his back upon me without condescending to hear me, he withdrew to his private chamber. I now thought this nobleman much plainer looking than he really was, and left the room, overwhelmed by so savage a reception, and not knowing what to think of it.

Having rejoined Scipio, who was waiting for me at the door, I said, "Do you know what sort of a reception I have met with?" "No," he answered, "but it is not hard to imagine. The minister, anxious to fulfil the wishes of the monarch, has doubtless offered you some valuable post." "That is where you make a mistake," I replied; and then I told him how

I had been received. He listened very attentively, and said—"You astonish me! The Count cannot have remembered you, or he must have taken you for some one else. I would advise you to go and see him again; I have no doubt he will look on you more favourably." I followed my secretary's advice; and presented myself a second time before the minister, who, treating me still worse than before, frowned when he looked at me, as if my appearance had annoyed him; then, he turned his head away, and withdrew without uttering a word.

I was stung to the quick by this behaviour, and was tempted to set out at once for Valencia; but Scipio opposed this project, being unable to make up his mind to renounce the expectations which he had conceived. "Do you not perceive," I said to him, "that the Count wants to drive me away from Court? The monarch has expressed to him how favourable he felt inclined towards me; is not that enough to draw down upon me the aversion of the favourite? Let us yield, my dear fellow, let us yield with a good grace to the power of so redoubtable a foe." "Sir," he replied, in a rage with the Count of Olivarez, "I would not yield so easily; I would even require an explanation of such an offensive reception; I would go and complain to the King of the little regard which the minister pays to his recommendation." "Bad



advice indeed, my friend," said I: "were I to take such an imprudent step, I would soon repent it; I am not even sure whether I do not run some risk, by staying any longer in this town."

At these words my secretary began to reflect, and considering that we had in point of fact to do with a man who might send us again to the tower of Segovia, he shared my fear. He no longer opposed my desire to leave Madrid, which I resolved to quit on the very next day.

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### CHAPTER III.

WHAT PREVENTED GIL BLAS FROM CARRYING OUT  
HIS RESOLUTION TO ABANDON THE COURT;  
AND THE IMPORTANT SERVICE WHICH JOSEPH  
NAVARRO RENDERED HIM.

RETURNING to my lodgings, I met Joseph Navarro, clerk of the kitchen to Don Balthazar de Zuniga, and one of my old friends. I hesitated for a few moments whether I should feign not to see him, or speak to him and ask his pardon for the bad manner in which I had treated him. I decided on the latter course, bowed to Navarro, and addressing him very politely, said—"Do you recognise me?"

And do you still care to speak to a wretch who has repaid with ingratitude the friendship you showed for him?" "You acknowledge, then," he replied, "that you did not treat me very well?" "Yes," I rejoined, "and you are fully justified in loading me with reproaches; I deserve them, if, indeed, I have not 'expiated my crime by the remorse which has followed it.'" "Since you have repented of your fault," said Navarro, embracing me, "I ought to remember it no more." I pressed Joseph in my arms; and we resumed our former feelings for each other.

He had heard of my imprisonment and the ruin of my prospects, but he knew no more. I told him all; I even repeated the conversation I had had with the King, and did not conceal the bad reception which the minister had just given me, nor my intention of returning to my solitude. "Beware of leaving the Court!" he said. "His Majesty has shown a disposition to befriend you, and that ought to be of some service to you. Between ourselves, the Count of Olivarez is of a somewhat eccentric disposition, and is a nobleman full of whims. Sometimes, as on the present occasion, he acts in a repellant manner; and he alone knows why he behaves in such a singular fashion. But whatever reasons he may have had for giving you such a bad reception, do not budge;<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> In the original, *tenez ici pied à boule*, keep your feet where the ball has fallen.

he will not prevent you from profiting by the Prince's kindness; you may take my assurance for that. I will mention your case this evening to Don Balthazar de Zuniga, my master,<sup>1</sup> uncle to the Count of Olivarez, and who shares with him the toils and cares of office." Navarro, after having said this, asked me where I was living; and then we separated.

It was not long before I saw him again, for he came to me on the next day. "Señor de Santillana," he said, "you have now a protector; my master will give you his support. On the strength of the good character which I have given your lordship,<sup>2</sup> he has promised me to speak for you to his nephew the Count of Olivarez, and I have no doubt that he will influence him in your favour. I venture to say that you may reckon on that." My friend Navarro, not wishing to serve me by halves, introduced me two days afterwards to Don Balthazar, who graciously said to me—"Señor de Santillana, your friend Joseph has spoken so highly of you that I shall forward your interest." I made a low obeisance to Señor de Zuniga, and replied that I should all my life feel my great obligation to Navarro, for having procured me the protection of a minister who

<sup>1</sup> Joseph Navarro had been a long time in Zuniga's service, for he was already there before Gil Blas went to Madrid. (See vol. ii. bk. vii. ch. 5.)

<sup>2</sup> *Votre seigneurie*,\* in the original. See vol. i., INTRODUCTORY NOTICE, p. xxxvii. 9°.

was justly called "the light of the Council." At this flattering reply Don Balthazar clapped me on the shoulder, saying with a smile—"Call again to-morrow on the Count of Olivarez; you will be better pleased with him."

I therefore for the third time made my appearance before the Prime Minister, who, having distinguished me in the crowd, gave me a look, accompanied by a smile, from which I drew a good omen. "This is as it should be," I soliloquised, "the uncle has made the nephew listen to reason." I now expected nothing but a favourable reception, and my expectation was fulfilled. The Count, after having given audience to everybody, sent for me, took me with him into his private room, and said to me, familiarly—"My friend Santillana, pardon me the annoyance I have caused you, merely to divert myself; I took it into my head to give you some anxiety, in order to test your discretion, and to see how you would behave when in a bad humour. Doubtless you thought that you had offended me; but on the contrary, my good fellow,<sup>1</sup> I will own that I like your appearance much. Yes, Santillana, you please me; and, even, if the King, my master, had not enjoined me to promote your fortune, I should have done so from my own inclination. Besides, my uncle Don Balthazar de Zuniga, to whom I can refuse

<sup>1</sup> Lesage uses *mon enfant*. See bk. ix. ch. iv. p. 120, note 1.



nothing, has requested me to regard you as a man in whom he is interested. No more is needed to determine me to give you some confidential post."

This beginning made such a deep impression on me that my emotions overcame me. I threw myself at the feet of the minister, who, having told me to rise, continued thus—"Return here this afternoon, and ask for my steward; he will inform you what orders I have given him." With these words his Excellency left his room to hear mass, which he was daily in the habit of doing, after having given his audience; then he repaired to the King's levee.

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## CHAPTER IV.

### GIL BLAS GAINS THE AFFECTION OF THE COUNT OF OLIVAREZ.

I DID not fail to return to the Prime Minister's house in the afternoon, and to inquire for his steward, whose name was Don Raymond Caporis. I had no sooner told him my name than, bowing to me in a most respectful manner, he said—"Señor, please follow me; I will take you to the rooms assigned to you in this house." Having said this, he led me

up a small flight of stairs, to a suite of five or six rooms on one floor, which formed the second storey of one wing of the house, and which were furnished without any ostentation. "This," he said, "is the residence which his lordship has destined for you, and every day covers will be laid for six persons at his expense; the Count's own servants will wait upon you, and a carriage will always be at your service. This is not all," he added; "his Excellency has given me strict injunctions to pay you the same respect as if you were of the family of Guzman."<sup>1</sup>

"What the deuce is the meaning of all this?" I soliloquised. "What am I to think of all these marks of distinction? Is there no mischief in this, and is it not also in jest that the minister treats me with so much honour? That is what I am inclined to believe; for is it, indeed, natural that a minister of the Spanish crown should behave in such a way towards me?" While I was in this uncertainty, driven to and fro between fear and hope, a page came and told me that the Count was asking for me. I went instantly to his Excellency, who was alone in his room. "Well, Santillana," he said, "are you satisfied with your apartments, and with the orders I have given to Don Raymond?" "Your Excellency's

<sup>1</sup> The family name of the Count of Olivarez was Don Gaspard de Guzman.

favours," I replied, "seem to me to be excessive, and I can only receive them with fear and trembling." "Why so?" he rejoined. "Can I show too much honour to a man whom the King has committed to my care, and for whose interests he wishes me to provide? Certainly not; I do no more than my duty by treating you with distinction. Therefore, be no longer surprised at what I do for you; and be assured that a brilliant and solid fortune cannot fail to be yours, if you are as devoted to me as you were to the Duke of Lerma."

"But, talking of that nobleman," he continued, "it is said that you lived on familiar terms with him. I am curious to know how you became first acquainted, and what employment that minister gave you. Conceal nothing from me; I require of you a candid account." I then remembered how embarrassed I had felt with the Duke of Lerma on a similar occasion, and in what manner I extricated myself; I once again adopted the same course very successfully; that is to say, I softened down the passages in my story likely to give umbrage, and passed lightly over matters which did me but little credit. I also treated the Duke of Lerma gently, though by not sparing him at all, I might have pleased my hearer better. As for Don Rodrigo de Calderon, I showed him no mercy, but went into the details of all the fine hauls which I knew he had made in his traffic

of commanderships, benefices, and governorships.

“What you have told me about Calderon,” the minister interrupted, “agrees with certain memorials which have been presented to me against him, containing charges still more seriously affecting his character. He will very soon be put on his trial; and if you wish his downfall, I fancy your wishes will be satisfied.”<sup>1</sup> “I do not desire his death,” I said, “although it was not his fault that I did not meet with mine in the tower of Segovia, where he was the cause of my dwelling there for a pretty long time.” “What!” replied his Excellency in astonishment, “it was Don Rodrigo, then, who caused you to be imprisoned? I did not know that. Don Balthazar, to whom Navarro related your story, told me, indeed, that the late King had ordered you to be imprisoned, as a punishment for having taken the Prince of Spain by night to a house of suspicious character; but that is all I know of the matter, and cannot conjecture what part Calderon could have played in this comedy.” “The part of a lover avenging an injury,” I replied. Thereupon I related to him all the details of the adventure, which he thought so amusing that, grave as he was, he could not help laughing till he actually shed

<sup>1</sup> Calderon, imprisoned in 1619, was publicly beheaded, after a trial which lasted about two years and a half.



tears. Catalina's part, sometimes as a niece and sometimes as a grand-daughter, diverted him vastly, and so did the share which the Duke of Lerma had taken in the intrigue.

When I had ended my story the Count dismissed me, telling me at the same time that he would not fail to give me some business to transact on the next day. I hastened at once to Zuniga's house, to thank Don Balthazar for his good offices, and to inform my friend Joseph of the conversation I had just had with the Prime Minister, and of his Excellency's favourable disposition towards me.

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## CHAPTER V.

THE PRIVATE CONVERSATION GIL BLAS HAD WITH NAVARRO ; AND THE FIRST OCCUPATION WHICH THE COUNT OF OLIVAREZ GAVE HIM.

As soon as I saw Joseph I said to him in an agitated manner that I had much to tell him. He took me into a private place, where, after having communicated to him everything that had taken place, I asked him what he thought of it. "I think," he answered, "that you are in a fair way to make an enormous fortune. Everything smiles on you ; you please the Prime Minister ; and, what is not to be de-

spised, I can render you the same service which you received from my uncle Melchior de la Ronda, when you entered the service of the Archbishop of Grenada. He spared you the trouble of finding out the weak side of the prelate and of his principal officers, by delineating to you their various characters ; and, after his example it is my purpose to describe to you those of the Count, of the Countess his wife, and of Donna Maria de Guzman, their only child.

To begin with the minister ; he has a quick, penetrating mind, suited to the planning of great designs. He affects to be a universal genius, because he has a smattering of all sciences ; and thinks himself capable of giving an opinion on every subject. He fancies himself a profound lawyer, a great general, and a most astute politician. Add to all this, that he is obstinate in his opinions, which he will always follow rather than those of other people, through fear of seeming to defer to anyone else's intellect. Between ourselves, this blot in his character may have strange consequences, from which Heaven preserve the kingdom ! I may add that he shines in council by the force of natural eloquence, and that he could write as well as he speaks, if he did not affect a certain obscurity and excess of purism, in order to give more dignity to his style. His mode of thought is peculiar to himself ; and as I believe I have

already told you, he is capricious and whimsical. Such is the picture of his mind : let me now draw that of his heart. He is generous, and a steady friend. It is said that he is vindictive ; but what Spaniard is not ? Moreover, he is accused of ingratitude, for having sent into banishment the Duke of Uzeda and Brother Lewis of Aliaga, to whom, as it is commonly reported he was under great obligations. This also we must pardon him ; the desire of being Prime Minister dispenses a man from showing any gratitude.”<sup>1</sup>

“Donna Agnes de Zuniga e Velasco, Countess of Olivarez,” continued Joseph, “is a lady, who has no other fault, as far as I know, except that of selling for an enormous price the favours she obtains from her husband. As for Donna Maria de Guzman, who is without question, at this moment, the very best match in Spain, she is an accomplished young lady, and the idol of her father. Regulate your conduct accordingly ; be careful and pay your court to these two ladies, and appear to be still more devoted to the Count of Olivarez than ever you were to the Duke of Lerma before your excursion to Segovia ; you will then become a man laden with honours and wealth.

<sup>1</sup> This observation of Navarro proves that Lesage was not ignorant that the Duke of Uzeda had been Prime Minister of Philip III. ; and that, therefore, it was through negligence our author had stated that on the death of that monarch the Duke of Lerma was filling that post.

“I advise you further,” he added, “to see my master, Don Balthazar, occasionally; though you may need him no longer in order to get on, still do not neglect him. You stand well in his opinion; preserve his esteem and his friendship; he may be able to help you if any case of emergency.” “As the uncle and nephew rule the State together,” I observed to Navarro, “does there not exist perhaps some jealousy between these two colleagues?” “No,” he replied, “they are, on the contrary, perfectly united. Had it not been for Don Balthazar, the Count of Olivarez might not have become Prime Minister; for, indeed, after the death of Philip III., all the friends and partisans of the house of Sandoval<sup>1</sup> were very active, some in favour of the Cardinal, and others in his son’s behalf; but my master, the most subtle of courtiers, and the Count, who is hardly less intelligent than he, checkmated their designs, and schemed so judiciously to secure the vacant place that they triumphed over their rivals. The Count of Olivarez, when he became Prime Minister, shared the duties of this office with Don Balthazar, his uncle, leaving to him the management of foreign affairs, and reserving the home affairs to himself; the consequence is that the bonds of friendship which naturally unite persons of the same family have been drawn closer between these two noblemen, who

<sup>1</sup> The family name of the Duke of Lerma.



are independent of each other, and live on such good terms that they seem to me to be unalterable.<sup>1</sup>”

Such was the substance of my conversation with Joseph, and I firmly resolved to profit by it; after this, I went to thank Señor de Zuniga for the influence he had been kind enough to exert for me. He told me very politely that he should always avail himself of any opportunity to benefit me, and that he was very glad I was pleased with his nephew, to whom, he assured me, he would again speak in my favour; being desirous, at least, to show me, as he was kind enough to say, that he had a care for my interests, and that, instead of one protector I had two. Thus Don Balthazar, out of regard for Navarro, had the moulding of my fortune truly at heart.

The same evening I left my lodgings to go and take up my abode at the Prime Minister's, where I sat down to supper with Scipio in my own room. You should have seen our faces! We were both waited on by the servants belonging to the household, who, during the meal, whilst we assumed an imposing gravity, probably laughed at their perfunctory respect for us. When they had gone away, after having cleared the table, my secretary, throwing off

<sup>1</sup> This connection between Olivarez and Don Balthazar de Zuniga is historically true; the latter had all the capacity which the former assumed.

his constraint, said a thousand foolish things, engendered by his sprightly humour and his hopes. As for me, though delighted by the brilliant position in which I found myself, I did not yet feel any inclination to be dazzled by it. So, having retired to bed, I slept soundly, without being haunted by these flattering delusions which might have occupied my mind; whereas the ambitious Scipio took little rest, and spent more than half the night in storing up treasures for the dowry of his daughter Seraphina.

Next morning I was scarcely dressed before a messenger came to me from his lordship. I was soon in attendance on his Excellency, who said to me, "Now then, Santillana; suppose you show us a specimen of what you can do. You told me that the Duke of Lerma used to give you state papers to write; I intend to let you compose one to try your skill. I will tell you the subject of it; therefore listen to me attentively. I wish a work to be written to influence the public in favour of my ministry. I have already secretly spread about the rumour that I found the affairs of the state in great disorder; and now we have to show the court and the town the miserable condition to which the monarchy is reduced. For this purpose we must draw a picture which may strike the people, and prevent it from regretting my predecessor. After you have done this, you can

extol the measures which I have taken to make the King's reign glorious, his dominions prosperous, and his subjects perfectly happy."

His Excellency having thus spoken, put into my hands a paper containing the just causes of complaint against the former administration. I remember that there were ten heads, the least important of which was of a nature to alarm true Spaniards; then, taking me into a little room next his own, he left me there to work at liberty. I began to write my memorial as well as I could; I first set forth the wretched condition of the realm, the finances exhausted, the royal revenues mortgaged to tax collectors, and the navy ruined. Next I brought forward the faults committed by those who had governed the State during the last reign, and the disastrous consequences which might result from this. Lastly, I represented the monarchy as in danger, and censured the preceding ministry so strongly that the loss of the Duke of Lerma was, according to my memorial, a great advantage for Spain. To tell the truth, though I had no resentment against that nobleman, I was not sorry to do him this good turn. Such is man!

In conclusion, after a terrible picture of the evils which threatened Spain, I re-assured men's minds by artfully inspiring the public with bright expectations for the future. To this end, I put into the mouth of the Count of

Olivarez the language of a redeemer sent by Heaven to save the nation. I made wonderful promises ; in a word, I entered so thoroughly into the ideas of the new minister that, when he had read the whole of my work, he seemed surprised. "Santillana," he said, "I should not have thought you capable of composing such a state paper. Do you know that you have just written a document worthy of the pen of a Secretary of State? I can no longer be surprised at the Duke of Lerma making use of your pen. Your style is concise and even elegant, but I think it a little too natural." And forthwith, pointing out the passages which were not to his taste, he corrected them ; and I judged from his corrections that he liked obscure and affected expressions, as Navarro had told me. Nevertheless, though he aimed at grandeur, or rather affectation, in his style, he yet retained two thirds of my paper ; and, by way of showing me how pleased he was with it, sent me after dinner three hundred pistoles by Don Raymond.

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## CHAPTER VI.

HOW GIL BLAS EMPLOYED HIS THREE HUNDRED PISTOLES, AND THE COMMISSION HE ENTRUSTED TO SCIPIO. THE SUCCESS OF THE PAPER MENTIONED IN THE PRECEDING CHAPTER.

THIS present from the minister gave Scipio a new opportunity of congratulating me on having returned to Court, which he did not fail to take advantage of. "You see," said he, "that fortune has great things in store for your lordship!<sup>1</sup> Are you sorry now that you have left your solitude? May the Count of Olivarez live for ever! He is a very different patron from his predecessor. The Duke of Lerma, though you were so attached to him, let you starve for several months without giving you a single pistole; and the Count has already made you a present which you could only have ventured to expect after long service.

"I wish," he added, "that the lords of Leyva could witness the good fortune which you enjoy, or at least that they knew of it!" "It is time I told them," I replied, "and that is what I was going to speak to you about. Doubtless they are very anxious to hear from me; but I have been waiting to send them some

<sup>1</sup> Lesage employs here again *votre seigneurie*. See vol. i., INTRODUCTION NOTICE, p. xxxviii., 10°.

tidings, until my fate was settled, and till I could positively let them know whether I should stay at Court or not. Now, that I see my way clearly, you may set out for Valencia as soon as you like, to inform their lordships of my present condition, which I consider as their doing, since it is certain that I should never have resolved on going to Madrid but for them." "If that be the case," exclaimed the son of La Coscolina, "Don Cæsar and Don Alphonso shall soon be told of the actual state of your affairs. What pleasure shall I give them by relating what has happened to you! I wish I were already at the gates of Valencia! But I shall be there in a few days. Don Alphonso's two horses are quite ready; I shall set out with one of his Excellency's servants; for I shall be glad to have a companion on the road, and besides, you know, that the livery of a Prime Minister throws dust in people's eyes."

I could not help laughing at the foolish vanity of my secretary; and yet, probably more vain than himself, I let him do as he pleased. "Go," I said, "and come back quickly; for I have another commission for you. I mean to send you to the Asturias, to take some money to my mother; I have carelessly let the time pass by when I promised to remit her a hundred pistoles, which you undertook to deliver into her own hands. Such engagements ought to be held so sacred by a son,

that I reproach myself for my want of punctuality in keeping my promises." "You are right, sir," Scipio answered, "and I am vexed with myself for not having reminded you of it. But let us have patience! In six weeks, at the longest, I will bring you an account of these two commissions; I shall have seen the lords of Leyva, paid a visit to your estate, and taken another peep at the town of Oviedo, which I cannot recall to mind without wishing seven eighths of its inhabitants at the deuce." I then counted out a hundred pistoles to Scipio for my mother's annuity, and another hundred for himself, to make him comfortable during the long journey he was about to undertake.

A few days after his departure, his lordship sent our memorial to press. It was no sooner published than it became the universal topic of conversation throughout Madrid. The people, enamoured of novelty, were delighted with the pamphlet; the exhaustion of the finances, described in such vivid colours, incensed them against the Duke of Lerma; and if the buffets which that minister received were not applauded by everybody, they met, at all events, with some approbation. As for the magnificent promises which the Count of Olivarez made, and among others that of providing for the expenses of the State by a prudent system of economy, without pressing hard on the public, they dazzled the citizens at large, and confirmed them in the

high opinion which they already entertained of his intellect : so that the whole city resounded with his praise.

The minister, delighted to see that he had obtained by this pamphlet what he wanted, which had only been to secure the favour of the public, was minded to deserve it in reality by an act worthy of all praise, and one which should be serviceable to the King. For this purpose he had recourse to an invention of the Emperor Galba : namely, to make those individuals who had enriched themselves in the administration of the finances in any questionable way, disgorge their wealth. After these leeches should have given back the blood they had sucked, and when he had thus filled the King's treasury, he undertook to keep the money which he had obtained, by abolishing all pensions, not excepting his own, as well as all gratuities paid out of the King's exchequer.<sup>1</sup>

To succeed in this design, which he could not carry out without altering the whole complexion of the government, he commissioned me to write a new pamphlet, whereof he gave me the substance and form. Then he recommended me to raise my style as much as possible above its ordinary simplicity, so as to give

<sup>1</sup> The Roman Emperor Galba, the successor of Nero, tried indeed to make the favourites of his predecessor disgorge their ill-gotten wealth, but his efforts were in vain ; and so were those of the *chambres ardentes* in France, instituted for the same purpose, and of which Lesage had seen examples.



greater loftiness to my expressions. "I understand, my lord," said I; "your Excellency wishes to unite sublimity with brilliancy; it shall be so." I shut myself up in the same room where I had already worked; and there set about my task, after having invoked to my aid the eloquent genius of the Archbishop of Grenada.

I began by representing that it was necessary to preserve the money carefully in the royal coffers, and that it ought only to be employed in the emergencies of the monarchy, as a sacred fund which it behoved us to hold, so as to keep the enemies of Spain in awe. Then I pointed out to the sovereign, for it was to him that the pamphlet was addressed, that by abolishing all pensions and allowances paid out of the ordinary revenue, he would not thereby deprive himself of the pleasure of recompensing such of his subjects as deserved his favour, since, without drawing upon his treasury, he was in a position to bestow upon them great rewards: that for some persons he had in his gift vice-royalties, governorships, orders of knighthood and various military employments; for others, commanderies, or pensions on them, magistracies which gave a title; and finally all sorts of benefices for those devoted to the practice of religion.

This memorial, which was much longer than the first, occupied me nearly three days;

but fortunately it was exactly to my master's mind, who, finding it to be written with emphasis, and crammed with metaphors, overwhelmed me with praise. "I like that very much," he said, pointing to the most inflated passages; "those expressions are from the right mint. Courage, my friend, I can see that you will be very useful to me." However, notwithstanding all the praise he lavished on me, he did not fail to touch up my composition, to introduce a good deal of his own, and to manufacture a specimen of eloquence which delighted the King and the whole court. The town also approved of it, augured well of the future, and flattered itself that the monarchy would regain its ancient splendour under the ministry of such a great man. His Excellency, finding that this pamphlet gained him great credit, desired that I should reap some advantage of it, on account of the share I had had in its composition. He assigned me an annuity of five hundred crowns on the commandery of Castile, which seemed to be an honourable reward for my labour, and was the more acceptable to me as it was not an ill-acquired gain, though it had been very easily earned.

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## CHAPTER VII.

BY WHAT CHANCE, IN WHAT PLACE, AND IN WHAT  
CONDITION GIL BLAS MET ONCE MORE HIS  
FRIEND FABRICIO, AND OF THE CONVERSATION  
WHICH THEY HELD TOGETHER.

NOTHING gave his Highness greater pleasure than to learn what was thought in Madrid of the working of his administration. Not a day passed but he inquired what was said of him in society. He even kept spies in his pay to bring him an exact account of all that was going on in town. They reported to him the slightest conversations which they had overheard; and as he enjoined them to suppress nothing, his self-esteem suffered sometimes, for the people have a freedom of speech which respects nothing.

When I perceived that the Count liked to receive such reports, I made it a habit to frequent places of public resort in the afternoons, and to join in the conversation of respectable men, if there were any present. If they spoke of the government, I listened attentively; and, if they said anything worth repeating to his Excellency, I did not fail to communicate it to him. But I was careful not to report anything to him except what was to his advantage; it

struck me that this was the right way to do with a man of the minister's character.

One day, returning from one of these places of public resort, I passed the gate of an hospital, and it occurred to me to go in. I went through two or three wards full of patients in bed, and looked well about me. Amongst these unfortunate people, whom I could not look at without compassion, I observed one who attracted my attention; I fancied I recognised Fabricio, my old companion and fellow-townsman. To look at him more closely, I drew near his bedside, and unable to doubt that it was the poet Nunez, I stopped to glance at him for a few seconds without saying a word. He also remembered me, and stared at me in the same fashion. At last, breaking silence, I said—"Do not my eyes deceive me? Is it indeed Fabricio whom I meet in this place?" "It is indeed," he replied coldly, "and you need not wonder at it. Since I parted from you, I have continued to follow the calling of literature; I have written novels, comedies, and works of genius of every kind. I have reached the goal, and am now in the hospital."<sup>1</sup>

I could not help laughing at these words,

<sup>1</sup> This is an allusion to the three final lines of an epigram of François Maynard (1582-1646), which are as follows:—

Malherbe, en cet âge brutal,  
Pégase est un cheval qui porte  
Les grands hommes à l'hôpital.



and still more at the serious air with which he uttered them. "What!" I cried, "has your muse brought you here, and played you such a dirty trick?" "As you see," said he. "This establishment often serves as a retreat for men of wit. You were right, my dear fellow," he continued, "to take a different course from mine. But I think you are no longer at Court, and your circumstances have altered; I even remember hearing that you were in prison by the King's order." "They told you no more than the truth," I replied; "the delightful condition in which you left me when we parted, was shortly afterwards followed by a reverse of fortune which deprived me of my wealth and my liberty. However, my friend, *post nubila Phœbus*;<sup>1</sup> I am again in a more brilliant position than ever I was." "Impossible!" said Nunez; "your bearing is sober and modest; you have not that vain and insolent manner which prosperity generally bestows." "Disgrace," I replied, "has purified my character; and I have learned in the school of adversity to enjoy wealth without allowing it to master me."

"Tell me then," said Fabricio, raising himself, and sitting up, quite delighted, "what your occupation can possibly be? What are you doing now? Are you steward to some nobleman out at elbows, or to some rich

<sup>1</sup> "The sun breaks out of a cloud."

widow?" "I have a much better post," I rejoined; "but pray excuse me from saying more at present; I will satisfy your curiosity another time. At present I will content myself with telling you that I am in a condition to do you a service, or rather to put you at your ease for the rest of your life, provided you promise me not to write any more works of genius, either in verse or prose. Do you feel able to make so great a sacrifice for my sake?" "I have already made it for Heaven's sake," he said, "during the dangerous illness from which I am now recovering. A Dominican friar made me abjure poetry, as an amusement which, if not criminal, at least diverts the mind from the goal of wisdom."

"I congratulate you, my dear Nunez," I replied; "you have acted wisely, my friend: but beware of a relapse!" "Oh," he rejoined, resolutely, "I don't fear that in the least; I have firmly determined to abandon the muses; and as you entered this ward I was making some verses to bid them an everlasting farewell." "Master Fabricio," I said, shaking my head, "I am not sure that the Dominican friar and I ought to rely on your vow of abjuration: you seem to me over head and ears in love with those learned virgins." "No, no," he replied, "I have broken every tie which united me to them. Nay, more; I have conceived an aversion for the public, and my dislike is

well founded ; it does not deserve authors willing to consecrate their labours to it ; I should be sorry to produce anything which would please it. Do not imagine," he continued, "that vexation dictates this language ; I am speaking now quite calmly. I despise the applause of the public as much as its disapprobation. You never know who will fail or succeed : the public is like a capricious creature who is of one opinion to-day and of another to-morrow. What silly fellows dramatic poets are, to be vain of their plays when they are well received ! Whatever noise they make on the stage when they are first brought out, they rarely can bear perusal after they are printed ; and if they are again put on the stage, twenty years later, they are generally badly received. The present generation accuses the past of bad taste, and its judgments are, in their turn, contradicted by those of the next. I have always observed this, and hence I conclude that the authors who are applauded now, must expect to be hissed hereafter. It is just the same with novels and other books for amusement which are sent into the world. Though at first they meet with general approbation, they gradually fall into neglect. The reputation which we derive from the lucky success of a work is therefore a simple conceit, an illusion of the mind, a fire of straw whereof the smoke soon vanishes into the air."

Though I was quite convinced that the poet of the Asturias was saying this only because he was in a bad temper, I pretended not to notice it. "I am delighted," said I, "that you are disgusted with setting up as a wit, and radically cured of your rage for writing. You may reckon on my shortly procuring for you an occupation, in which you will be able to grow rich, without being obliged to a large outlay of talent." "So much the better," he cried, "genius is offensive to me, and I regard it now as the most fatal gift which Heaven can bestow on a man." "I hope, my dear Fabricio," I replied, "that you may always retain your present sentiments. If you persist in your resolution of abandoning poetry, I repeat, that I will soon obtain for you an honourable and lucrative post. But, until I can render you this service," I added, slipping a purse with sixty pistoles into his hand, "I beg you to accept this little token of my friendship."

"Generous friend!" cried the son of barber Nunez, in a transport of joy and gratitude; "how thankful ought I to be that Heaven brought you to this hospital, which I shall leave this very day through your assistance!" And accordingly he had himself removed to a furnished lodging. But before we parted I gave him my address, and invited him to come and see me as soon as he should be restored to



health. He was extremely surprised when I told him I lived with the Count of Olivarez. "Oh! too happy Gil Blas!" he said, "whose fate it is to please ministers! I rejoice in your prosperity since you make such a good use of it."

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## CHAPTER VIII.

GIL BLAS SECURES THE FAVOUR OF HIS MASTER MORE AND MORE EVERY DAY. SCIPIO'S RETURN TO MADRID, AND THE ACCOUNT OF HIS JOURNEY WHICH HE GIVES TO SANTILLANA.

THE Count of Olivarez, whom I shall henceforth call the Count-Duke, since it pleased the King at this time to confer that title on him, had a weakness which I discovered to my advantage; it was a desire to be loved. As soon as he fancied that anyone was disposed to become attached to him, he admitted him into his friendship. I was careful not to neglect this discovery, and did not content myself with performing to the best of my abilities what he bade me, but I executed his orders with such demonstrations of zeal as delighted him. I studied his taste in all things, that I might conform myself to it, and anticipated his wishes as much as I could.

By conduct like this, which almost invariably answers, I gradually became my master's favourite; and he, on the other hand, as I had the same weakness as himself, won my heart by the marks of affection which he bestowed on me. I insinuated myself into his favour so far, that, at length, I shared his confidence with Señor Carnero,<sup>1</sup> his principal secretary.

Carnero had employed the same mode as myself to please his Excellency; and he had succeeded so well that the latter entrusted him with some of the state secrets. Thus, this secretary and myself, were the two confidants of the Prime Minister, and the depositaries of his secrets, with this difference, that he consulted Carnero only on State affairs, and myself on his private concerns; which made as it were two separate departments, which equally pleased us both. We lived together without jealousy, but without becoming intimate. I had every reason to be content with my situation, for it gave me continual opportunities of being with the Count-Duke, and enabled me to read his innermost soul, which, disingenuous as it was by nature, kept nothing concealed from me, when he no longer doubted the sincerity of my attachment for him.

"Santillana," he said to me one day, "you have seen the Duke of Lerma enjoy an authority less like that of a favoured minister than

<sup>1</sup> *Carnero* is the Spanish for "sheep."

like the power of an absolute monarch; but still I am happier than he was at the zenith of his good fortune. He had two formidable enemies in his own son the Duke of Uzeda and in the confessor of Philip III;<sup>1</sup> whereas I perceive no one about the King influential enough to injure me, nor even one whom I suspect of ill-will towards me."

"It is true," he continued, "that on my coming to the ministry, I took great care to permit no one to be near the King but members of my own family, or my friends. I got rid, by means of vice-royalties or embassies, of all those noblemen who, by their personal merits, might have deprived me of some portion of the sovereign's favour, which I desire to retain in its entirety; so that I may say at the present moment, that no great nobleman stands in the way of my personal influence. You see, Gil Blas," he continued, "that I am laying bare my heart to you. As I have reason to think you wholly devoted to me, I have chosen you for my confidant. You are clever; I believe you to be sensible, prudent, and discreet; in a word, you seem the very person to acquit yourself well of a score of various commissions which require a young man full of intelligence."

I was not able to withstand the flattering

<sup>1</sup> This confessor was friar Lewis of Alliaga, already mentioned in bk. ix., ch. vii. p. 159.

images which these words presented to my mind. The intoxication of avarice and ambition suddenly mounted to my brain, and awoke in me those sensations which I thought I had subdued. I protested to the minister that I would do my utmost to fulfil his expectations, and that I held myself in readiness to execute without scruple whatever commands he might think proper to give me.

While I was thus in the humour to raise new altars to fortune, Scipio returned from his travels. "I have not a long story to tell you," he said. "The lords of Leyva were delighted at the reception which the King gave you when he recognised you, and at the manner in which the Count of Olivarez treats you."

I interrupted Scipio. "My friend," I said, "you would have given them still more pleasure, could you have told them on what footing I am now with his lordship. The rapid progress I have made in his Excellency's affection, since you went away, has been something prodigious." "Heaven be praised for it, my dear master!" he replied; "I foresee that a grand destiny awaits us."

"Let us change the subject," I said, "and speak of Oviedo. You have been to the Asturias: how did you leave my mother?" "Ah, sir!" Scipio replied, suddenly assuming a sad aspect, "I have but sorry news for you from that quarter." "Good Heaven!" I exclaimed,



“my mother must be dead!” “Six months ago,” said my secretary, “the good lady paid the debt of nature, as did also your uncle, Señor Gil Perez.”

I felt deeply grieved by my mother’s death, although in my infancy I had not received from her those caresses, so necessary to children, if they are to be grateful in future. For the good canon I also shed tears; a debt which I owed him for the trouble he had taken in regard to my education. It is true that my grief did not last long, and soon passed into a certain tender recollection which I have always preserved of my relatives.

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## CHAPTER IX.

IN WHAT MANNER, AND TO WHOM THE COUNT-DUKE  
MARRIED HIS ONLY DAUGHTER; AND THE  
BITTER CONSEQUENCES OF THIS MARRIAGE.

A SHORT time after the return of the son of La Coscolina, the Count-Duke fell into a brown study which lasted for a whole week. I fancied that he was devising some great political stroke; but the subject of his meditation only concerned his own family. “Gil Blas,” he said one afternoon, “you may have perceived that I am troubled in my mind. Yes, my dear

fellow, I am engrossed by an affair on which the happiness of my life depends; I am disposed to confide it to you.

“Donna Maria, my daughter,” he continued, “is of an age to be married, and a large number of noblemen are striving to obtain her hand. The Count of Niebla,<sup>1</sup> the eldest son of the Duke of Medina Sidonia, head of the house of Guzman, and Don Lewis de Haro, eldest son of the Marquis of Carpio and my eldest sister, are the two rivals who seem to possess the greatest claim to being chosen. The latter, in particular, is so superior in point of merit to his rivals, that the whole court does not doubt that I shall select him for my son-in-law. Nevertheless, without entering into my private reasons for excluding him, as well as the Count of Niebla, I will tell you that I have cast my eyes on Don Ramirez Nunez de Guzman, Marquis of Toral, head of the house of the Guzmans of Abiados.<sup>2</sup> To this young nobleman, and to the children he may have by my daughter, I mean to leave all my property, as an entail to the title of Count of Olivarez, with the additional dignity of grandee; so that my grandchildren and their descendants, the issue of the branches of Abiados and Olivarez, shall

<sup>1</sup> Lesage had written, “Count of Niebles,” which is a misprint.

<sup>2</sup> This name was printed Abrados; hence great indignation on the part of M. Llorente.

be considered as the eldest branch of the house of Guzman.

“ Well, Santillana,” he added, “ do you not approve of my design ? ” “ Pardon me, my lord,” I replied, “ this project is worthy of the genius which has planned it ; but may I be permitted to make a remark to your Excellency upon this arrangement, and express a doubt whether the Duke of Medina Sidonia will not murmur at it ? ” “ Let him murmur if he likes,” replied the minister ; “ I care very little for that. I do not like his branch ; they have filched from the Abiados the right of seniority, and the privileges attached to it. I shall be far less affected by his complaints than by the disappointment of my sister, the Marchioness of Carpio, on learning that her son shall not receive my daughter’s hand. But, for all that, I mean to please myself, and Don Ramirez shall triumph over his rivals ; that I have settled in my own mind.”

The Count-Duke, having formed this resolution, did not carry it into effect without giving fresh evidence of his singular way of acting. He presented a petition to the King, entreating him, as well as the Queen, to condescend and choose a husband for his daughter, at the same time setting forth the qualities of the noblemen who were her suitors, and leaving the choice entirely to their Majesties. But he took care when naming the Marquis of Toral, to show

clearly that this choice would be the most agreeable to him. So the King, with his blind deference for his minister, returned the following reply:—

“I think Don Ramirez Nunez worthy of Donna Maria: but make your own choice. The match, which best suits you, will be the one to please me most. THE KING.”

The minister made a point of showing this reply about; and affecting to consider it as a command of the monarch's, he hastened to marry his daughter to the Marquis of Toral. This hurried marriage greatly offended the Marchioness of Carpio as well as such of the Guzmans who had cherished the hope of an alliance with Donna Maria. But, unable to prevent the union, they all joined in affecting to celebrate it with the greatest rejoicings. People might have fancied that the whole family was charmed by the arrangement; but the discontented were soon avenged, in a manner which was very melancholy for the Count-Duke. Donna Maria, at the end of ten months, gave birth to a daughter who was still-born; and a few days later she herself died in child-bed.<sup>1</sup>

What a loss for a father who had, so to say, no eyes for any one but for his daughter, and

<sup>1</sup> This account of the death of Donna Maria is not historically true. That lady died unmarried, though she was betrothed to Raymond de Guzman, Marquis of Toral.



who thus witnessed the failure of his design to deprive the branch of Medina Sidonia of its seniority! He was so affected by it that he shut himself up for a few days, and would see none but me, who, falling in with his poignant grief, appeared as much moved as himself. To tell the truth, I took this opportunity of shedding fresh tears to Antonia's memory. The similarity of her death to that of the Marchioness of Toral reopened an ill-healed wound; and so much disposed me to grieve, that the minister, overcome as he was by his own sorrow, could not help taking notice of mine. He was astonished to see me share his troubles, as I did. "Gil Blas," he said to me one day, when I seemed to be plunged into a profound melancholy, "it is a great consolation to me to have a confidant who feels my misfortunes so deeply." "Ah, my lord," I replied, giving him all the credit of my affliction, "I should be very ungrateful, and very insensible, were I not to feel them acutely. Can I reflect how you bewail the loss of a daughter of the rarest merit, whom you loved so tenderly, without adding my tears to your own? No my lord, I am too mindful of your kindness, not to participate throughout my whole life in your pleasures and your grief."

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## CHAPTER X.

GIL BLAS MEETS THE POET NUNEZ, WHO TELLS HIM THAT HE HAS WRITTEN A TRAGEDY WHICH IS FORTHWITH TO BE BROUGHT OUT AT THE PRINCE'S THEATRE. OF THE ILL SUCCESS OF THIS PIECE, AND THE SURPRISING GOOD FORTUNE BY WHICH IT WAS FOLLOWED.

THE minister was beginning to feel consoled, and I, in consequence, to regain my cheerfulness, when one evening I went out alone for a drive. On the road I met the poet of the Asturias, whom I had not seen again since he left the hospital. He was very decently dressed; I called him, made him get into my carriage, and we drove together through Saint Jerome's Meadow.<sup>1</sup>

"Mr Nunez," I said to him, "I am fortunate in happening to meet you; for otherwise I should not have had the pleasure . . ." "No reproaches, Santillana," he broke in hastily; "I will frankly confess that I would not have come to see you; and I will tell you why. You promised me a good place if I would forswear poetry; but I have found a very substantial one on condition of my writing verses.

<sup>1</sup> See vol. i. INTRODUCTORY NOTICE, p. xix., 12, and p. xxv. See also vol. i. bk. iii., ch. viii., p. 307.

I accepted the latter, as falling in best with my disposition. A friend of mine has got me a situation with Don Bertrand Gomez del Ribero, treasurer of the king's galleys. This Don Bertrand, who wanted to have a literary man in his pay, thought my verses very brilliant; and chose me in preference to five or six other authors who offered themselves as candidates for the post of his private secretary."

"I am delighted at the news, my dear Fabricio," said I; "for this Don Bertrand seems to be very rich." "Rich, indeed!" he replied; "they say he does not know himself how rich he is! However that may be, the nature of my employment under him is as follows: as he prides himself on his gallantry, and wishes to pass for a man of genius, he keeps up an epistolary intercourse with several very clever ladies; and I lend him my pen to compose for him charming letters sparkling with wit. I write to one in verse, to another in prose, and I sometimes carry the letters myself, to show the versatility of my talents."

"But you do not tell me," I said, "what I most wish to know. Are you well paid for your epistolary epigrams?" "Very well," he replied. "Rich men are not all open-handed, and I know some who are downright curmudgeons; but Don Bertrand behaves to me most handsomely. Besides a regular salary of two hundred pistoles, I occasionally receive

little perquisites from him, which enable me to live like a gentleman, and to spend my time pleasantly with a few authors, as much averse to melancholy as myself." "Apart from this," I said, "has your treasurer taste enough to enjoy the beauty of a work of genius, or to perceive its defects?" "Oh no," replied Nunez, "though he talks a good deal with a self-sufficient air, he is not a judge. Yet he pretends, all the same, to be a Tarpa,<sup>1</sup> decides boldly, and maintains his opinion so loudly, and with so much obstinacy, that when he argues, people are generally obliged to yield to him, in order to escape a shower of unpleasant remarks with which he is wont to overwhelm those who contradict him.

"You may imagine," he went on, "that I take great care never to contradict him, whatever cause he may give me; for besides the disagreeable epithets which I should not fail to draw down on myself, I might very possibly be turned out of doors. I therefore am discreet enough to approve what he praises, and likewise to disapprove whatever he condemns. By this complaisance, which costs me little, as I possess the art of agreeing with those who are useful to me, I have gained the esteem

<sup>1</sup> Spurius Metius Tarpa, a famous critic of the Augustan age, sat with four colleagues, in the temple of Apollo, at Rome, to judge of the merit of poetical compositions and dramatic pieces, before they were performed.



and friendship of my patron. He has employed me to write a tragedy, of which he gave me the idea and which I have composed under his eyes; if it succeeds I shall owe part of my glory to his good advice."

I asked our poet what was the title of his tragedy. "It is the 'Count of Saldagna,'" he said, "and will be acted at the Prince's Theatre in three days." "I trust it will be a great success," I replied, "and I have a sufficiently good opinion of your talents to expect that it will." I hope so too," he rejoined; "but hope never tells a more flattering tale than to some dramatic authors who are so uncertain about the issue of any work for the stage that they every day make a mistake."

To be brief, on the day of the first representation, I was unable to go to the theatre, being prevented by some business with which his Excellency had entrusted me. The only thing to be done was to send Scipio there, that I might at least know, on the same evening, the success of a play in which I was interested. I impatiently waited for him, and saw him return, with a face which seemed to me of evil omen. "Well!" said I, "how has the 'Count of Saldagna' been received by the public?" "Very roughly," he replied; never was a play more cruelly treated. I came away indignant at the insolence of the pit." And I am indignant," I replied, "at the passion of Nunez for

writing dramatic poems. He is no better than a mad man! He must have lost his senses to prefer the ignominious shouts of the spectators to the happy lot that I could provide for him!" Thus did I inveigh, out of friendship, against the poet of the Asturias, and grieve over the condemnation of his play, whilst he himself exulted at it.

In fact, two days later he came to my house, transported with joy. "Santillana," he cried, "I have come to impart you the delight which I feel, for I have made my fortune, my friend, by writing a bad piece. You know the strange reception which the 'Count of Saldagna' met with. All the spectators vied with each other in their rage against that play; and to this general outburst of violence I owe the greatest happiness of my life."

I was somewhat astonished to hear the poet Nunez talking in this fashion. "How is it possible, Fabricio," I said, "that the failure of your tragedy can, in any way, justify your immoderate joy?" "It certainly does," he replied; "I have already told you that Don Bertrand had put something of his own composition in the play; and therefore he thought it excellent. He was violently incensed at seeing the spectators taking a view different from his own. 'Nunez,' he said to me this morning, '*Victrix causa Diis placuit, sed victa Catoni*.'<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> The Gods choose the side of the conquering, but Cato that of the conquered. This is a well-known verse from Lucanus.

If the public is displeased with your play, on the other hand it has pleased me, and that ought to content you. To console you for the bad taste of the age, I shall settle on you an annuity of two thousand crowns, chargeable on the whole of my property; let us go forthwith to my notary and have the deed drawn up.' We went thither at once: the treasurer has signed the deed of gift, and paid me my first year in advance."

I congratulated Fabricio on the evil fate of the "Count of Saldagna," for it had turned out to the author's advantage. "You are quite right," he continued, "to congratulate me on that. Do you know, I could not have had better luck than to displease the pit? How fortunate I am to have been so violently hissed! If the public had been better disposed, and had honoured me with its applause, what would that have brought me? Nothing. I should only have got a very moderate sum for my work, whereas the hisses have all at once put me at my ease for the remainder of my life."

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## CHAPTER XI.

SANTILLANA PROCURES A SITUATION FOR SCPIO,  
WHO SETS OUT FOR NEW SPAIN.

My secretary did not regard the unexpected prosperity of the poet Nunez without envy; he talked of nothing else for a whole week. "I wonder," he would say, "at the capriciousness of Fortune, which sometimes delights in heaping wealth on a sorry author, whilst she leaves good writers in misery. I wish she would take it into her head to enrich me too, in a very short time." "That may easily happen," I said, "and sooner than you think. Here you are in her temple; for it seems to me that the house of a Prime Minister may be called the Temple of Fortune, for favours are often bestowed there which at once enrich those who obtain them." "That is very true, sir," he answered, "but a man has to wait for them with patience." "Once more, Scipio," I replied, "make your mind easy; it may be you are on the point of getting some good appointment." And, in fact, a few days later an opportunity occurred for employing him advantageously in the Count-Duke's service, and I did not suffer it to escape.

I was talking one morning to Don Raymond



Caporis, the Prime Minister's steward, and our conversation turned upon the income of his Excellency. "My lord," he said, "has commanderies of all the military orders, yielding a revenue of at least forty thousand crowns a year; and he is only obliged to wear the cross of Alcantara. Besides, his three offices of grand chamberlain, master of the horse, and high chancellor of the Indies, bring him an income of two hundred thousand crowns; and yet all this is nothing compared to the vast sums he draws from the Indies. Do you know how? When the King's vessels leave Seville or Lisbon for that country, he ships wine, oil, and corn, the produce of his estate of Olivarez, for which he pays no duty. He sells these articles in the Indies for four times more money than he would get for them in Spain; then he lays out that money in spices, pigments, and other things, which cost next to nothing in the new world, and are sold at a very high rate in Europe. By this trade he has already realized several millions, without doing the King the slightest injury."

"What will not surprise you much," he continued, "is, that all the persons employed in carrying on this trade return laden with riches, for his lordship does not take it amiss that they should do business for themselves as well as conduct his own."

The son of La Coscolina, who was listening

to our conversation, on hearing Don Raymond make this remark, could not help interrupting him. "On my word, Señor Caporis," he exclaimed, "I should be delighted to be one of those persons; I have long had a desire to visit Mexico." "Your curiosity shall soon be satisfied," said the steward, "if Señor de Santillana does not object to your wishes. Careful as I am in the choice of the people whom I send to the Indies on this business,—for they are chosen by me,—I will put you on my list without hesitation, if it is agreeable to your master." "You will confer on me a particular favour," I said to Don Raymond; "pray give me this mark of your friendship. Scipio is a young man of whom I am fond; moreover, he is very intelligent, and will behave in such a way as not to give the least cause for reproach. In a word, I can answer for him as for myself."

"That is more than enough," said Caporis; "he has only to repair immediately to Seville; the vessels will leave for the Indies in a month. At his departure I will give him a letter for a gentleman from whom he will receive all the instructions needed to make his fortune, without any prejudice to his Excellency's interests, which he must regard as sacred."

Scipio, charmed at having obtained this post, made haste to set out for Seville with a thousand crowns which I gave him, to buy wine and

oil in Andalusia, and to enable him to trade on his own account in the Indies. And yet, delighted as he was to make a voyage from which he expected to reap so much profit, he could not take leave of me without shedding tears; nor did I see him depart with indifference.

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## CHAPTER XII.

DON ALPHONSO DE LEYVA COMES TO MADRID. THE  
MOTIVE OF HIS JOURNEY. THE GRIEF OF GIL  
BLAS, AND THE JOY WHICH SUCCEEDED IT.

HARDLY had Scipio left me, when a page of the minister's brought me a note containing these words—"If Señor de Santillana will give himself the trouble of calling at the sign of Saint Gabriel, in Toledo Street, he will there see one of his best friends."

"Who can this friend be who does not give his name?" I soliloquised. "Why should he hide his name from me? Obviously he wants to give me a pleasant surprise." I went out at once, and made for Toledo Street. On reaching the place appointed, I was not a little astonished to find there Don Alphonso de Leyva. "What do I see?" I exclaimed; "you here, my lord!" "Yes, my dear Gil Blas,"

he replied, clasping me tightly in his arms, "it is Don Alphonso himself who appears before you." "But whatever brings you to Madrid?" I asked. "I am about to surprise you and to grieve you," he replied, "by telling you the cause of my journey. The government of Valencia has been taken from me, and the Prime Minister has ordered me to come to Madrid, to give an account of my conduct." I remained for a quarter of an hour stupefied, and unable to say a word; then, recovering myself, I asked—"Of what are you accused? You must surely have committed some imprudence." "My disgrace," he said, "is probably owing to a visit which I paid about three weeks ago to the Cardinal-Duke of Lerma, who was banished a month since to his estate of Denia."

"Truly!" I interrupted, "you are right to attribute your misfortune to this indiscreet visit; there is no need to look for the cause elsewhere; but give me leave to tell you that you did not act with your usual prudence when you went to visit a disgraced minister." "The fault is committed," he said, "and I resign myself to my lot without grumbling. I intend to retire with my family to the Castle of Leyva, where I shall spend the rest of my days in perfect tranquillity. What distresses me," he added, "is the having to appear before a haughty minister who may possibly receive me







with scant ceremony. What a mortification for a Spaniard ! However, it is a matter of necessity ; but I wanted to talk it over with you before submitting to it." "My lord," said I, "let me see what I can do. Do not present yourself before the minister until I know what you are accused of ; perhaps the evil is not without a remedy. Be that as it may, I hope, if you please, that you will give me leave to do for you all that gratitude and friendship shall dictate." With these words I left him at his inn, assuring him that he should hear from me forthwith.

As I had had nothing more to do with State affairs since the writing of the two pamphlets, of which such eloquent mention has been made, I went to look for Carnero, to ask him if it were true that Don Alphonso de Leyva had been deprived of the government of the town of Valencia. He replied in the affirmative, but professed he did not know the reason. Thereupon, I resolved without hesitation to address myself to his Excellency himself, that I might learn from his own mouth the cause of complaint against the son of Don Cæsar.

I was so overcome by this unfortunate occurrence, that I had no need to affect an appearance of sadness in order to seem troubled, and attract the Count-Duke's notice. "What is the matter, Santillana ?" said he, as soon as he saw me, "I perceive an expression of grief

on your countenance; nay, I see you are almost shedding tears. What does it mean? Hide nothing from me. Has anyone behaved ill to you? Speak, and you shall soon be avenged.” “My lord,” I replied, whilst shedding tears, “I could not conceal my grief from you, even if I would. I am in despair, for someone has just told me that Don Alphonso de Leyva is no longer governor of Valencia; no tidings could ever have afflicted me more deeply.” “What are you saying, Gil Blas?” replied the minister, in astonishment; “what interest can you take in this Don Alphonso and his government?” Then I related to him at length the obligations I was under to the lords of Leyva, and finally told him how I had obtained from the Duke of Lerma the government in question for the son of Don Cæsar.

His Excellency heard me to the end with an attention full of kindness, and then said—“Dry your tears, my friend. Ignorant as I was of what you have just told me, I must confess that I looked on Don Alphonso as a creature of the Cardinal of Lerma. Put yourself in my place. Would you not have considered the visit paid to his Eminence as very suspicious? Nevertheless, I am willing to believe that, having obtained his post from that minister, he may have taken this step merely from a motive of gratitude, and I pardon him. I am sorry to have dismissed a man who owed his position



to you ; but if I have destroyed what you have created, I can make amends for it. I will even do more for you than the Duke of Lerma did. Your friend, Don Alphonso, was only governor of the town of Valencia ; I appoint him Viceroy of the Kingdom of Aragon. You may go and acquaint him with this, and bid him come to take the oath.”

On hearing these words I passed from extreme grief to such an excess of joy, that it disturbed my mind, and betrayed itself in the thanks which I offered to his lordship. But my incoherence did not displease him ; and, on my informing him that Don Alphonso was in Madrid, he told me that I might introduce him this very day. I ran instantly to the hotel of Saint Gabriel, where I delighted Don Cæsar’s son by telling him of his new appointment. He could not believe what I said, and found it very difficult to persuade himself that the Prime-Minister, whatever might be his friendship, would dispose of a vice-royalty out of consideration for me. I took him with me to the Count-Duke, who received him very affably, and said—“Don Alphonso, you have discharged your governorship of the town of Valencia so well that the King, thinking you qualified to occupy a higher position, has appointed you to the viceroyalty of Aragon. This dignity,” he added, “is not beyond your birth, and the nobility of Aragon will have no

cause to murmur against the choice made by the Court."

His Excellency made no mention of me, and the public did not know the share I had in this matter; which saved the minister and Don Alphonso from the sneering remarks which society might have made about a viceroy of my creation.

As soon as Don Cæsar's son was certain of his appointment, he sent a special messenger with the information to Valencia to his father and Seraphina, who presently came up to Madrid. Their first care was to visit me, in order to overwhelm me with thanks. What a touching and proud spectacle it was, to behold the three persons who were dearest to me, embracing me one after another. They felt as pleased with my zeal and affection as with the honour which the post of viceroy would confer on their family; and they were never tired of expressing their gratitude to me. They even addressed me as if I had been a gentleman of their own rank; it seemed as though they had forgotten that they had once been my masters; they thought they could never manifest sufficient friendship for me. To pass over needless details, Don Alphonso received his official nomination, and, after having thanked the King and his minister, and taken the usual oath, left Madrid with his family, in order to establish himself at Saragossa. He made his

entry into that city with all imaginable splendour, and the Aragonese showed by their acclamations that I had given them a viceroy who was very acceptable to them.

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## CHAPTER XIII.

GIL BLAS MEETS DON GASTON DE COGOLLOS AND DON ANDREA DE TORDESILLAS AT COURT; HE ADJOURNS WITH THEM TO A MORE CONVENIENT PLACE. THE END OF THE STORY OF DON GASTON AND DONNA HELENA DE GALISTEO. THE SERVICE RENDERED BY SANTILLANA TO TORDESILLAS.

I WAS transported with joy at having so fortunately converted a dismissed governor into a viceroy; the de Leyvas themselves were even less delighted by it than I. I soon had another opportunity of employing my influence for a friend, which I think I must relate, to show my readers that I was no longer the same Gil Blas who, under the preceding minister, used to sell the favours of the Court.

One day I was in the King's antechamber, conversing with several noblemen who, knowing me to be a favourite of the Prime Minister, did not disdain to talk with me. Amongst those waiting I perceived Don Gaston de Cogollos,

whom I had left a state prisoner in the tower of Segovia, and also Don Andrea de Tordesillas, the keeper of that prison. I readily left my company to embrace these two friends. If they were astonished to see me again at Court, I was much more so to meet them there. After warm embraces on all sides, Don Gaston said—"Señor de Santillana, we have many questions to exchange, and this is not a suitable place for such a purpose; allow me to take you to a spot where Señor de Tordesillas and myself shall be very glad to have a long conversation with you." I consented; we made our way through the crowd, and left the palace. Don Gaston's carriage was waiting in the street; we all three got in, and drove to the great market-place, where the bull-fights are held. There Cogollos lived in a very handsome house.

"Señor Gil Blas," said Don Andrea, when we had entered a splendidly furnished room, "I imagined that when you left Segovia you hated the Court, and were resolved to quit it for ever?" "Such was, indeed, my intention," I replied; "and during the lifetime of the late King, I did not change my mind; but when I heard that the Prince, his son, was on the throne, I wanted to see if the new monarch would know me again. He did so, and I had the good fortune to be favourably received; he himself recommended me to the Prime-Minister, who has admitted me to his friendship; with



him I am in still greater favour than I ever was with the Duke of Lerma. This, Don Andrea, is what I had to tell you. And now, let me know if you are still keeper of the Tower of Segovia?" "No, indeed," he answered, "the Count-Duke has put another gentleman in my place; he apparently thought me entirely devoted to his predecessor." "And I," said Don Gaston, "was set at liberty for the opposite reason. The Prime Minister was no sooner informed that I was in the prison of Segovia by order of the Duke of Lerma, than he ordered me to be released. And now, Señor Gil Blas, I must tell you what has happened to me since I became a free man."

"The first thing I did," he continued, "after thanking Don Andrea for the kind attentions he had paid me during my imprisonment, was to go to Madrid. I presented myself to the Count of Olivarez, who said to me—'Be under no apprehension that the misfortune which befell you, in any way damages your reputation. You are fully justified; and I am the more convinced of your innocence, as the Marquis of Villareal, whose accomplice you were supposed to be, was not guilty. Though a Portuguese, and even a relative of the Duke of Braganza, he favours less his interests than those of the King, my master. Your connection with the Marquis ought not, therefore, to have been imputed to you as a crime; but, to repair the

injustice done you, by your being accused of high treason, the King appoints you to a lieutenancy in his Spanish Guards.' I accepted this post, begging his Excellency to permit me, before joining my regiment, to go and visit my aunt, Donna Eleonor de Laxarilla, at Coria. The minister gave me leave of absence for a month, and I set out, accompanied by only one servant.

"We had already passed Colmenar, and were travelling along a narrow pass between two mountains, when we perceived a gentleman valiantly defending himself against three men, who were attacking him. I did not hesitate about going to his aid, but hastened to join him, and drew my sword. I observed, whilst fighting, that our opponents were masked, and that we had to deal with expert swordsmen. However, in spite of their strength and skill, we were victorious. I ran one of them through the body; he fell from his horse, and the two others immediately took to flight. It is true that the victory was hardly less fatal to us than to the wretch whom I had slain; for, after the engagement, both my companion and myself found ourselves dangerously wounded. But imagine my surprise when I recognised in this gentleman Combados, the husband of Donna Helena! He was no less astonished to perceive that I was his defender. 'Ah, Don Gaston!' he exclaimed, 'it was you, then,

who came to my assistance? When you so generously took my part, you little thought that you defended a man who had robbed you of your mistress.' 'Indeed, I did not,' I said; 'but even if I had known it, do you suppose I should have hesitated to do what I did? Can you entertain so bad an opinion of me and believe me so base?' 'No, no,' he replied, "I have a better opinion of you; and should I die of the wounds I have just received, I hope and trust that yours may not prevent you from profiting by my death." 'Combados, 'I said to him, 'though I have not yet forgotten Donna Helena, know that I do not covet to be united to her at the cost of your life. I even congratulate myself on having contributed to rescue you from the blows of three assassins, since I have thereby performed an action of some service to your wife.'

"While we were thus speaking, my servant dismounted; and going up to the man who was stretched on the ground, took off his mask, and discovered features which Combados at once recognised. 'It is Caprara,' he cried, 'that treacherous cousin who, out of spite at having lost a rich inheritance which he unjustly disputed with me, has long entertained the idea of assassinating me, and had, at length, chosen this day to put his plan into execution; but Heaven willed that he should fall a victim to his own attempt.'

“Meanwhile our wounds were bleeding very freely, and we were gradually growing weaker. Yet, wounded as we were, we had strength enough to reach the borough of Villarejo, which was within reach of the field of battle. At the first inn where we arrived, we sent for surgeons. One came who was said to be very clever; he looked at our wounds, considered them rather dangerous, dressed them; and on the next day, after having removed the bandages, told us that the wounds of Don Blas were fatal. He formed a more favourable judgment of mine; and his prognostications proved correct.

“Combados, finding himself doomed to death, thought of nothing but preparing for it. He sent a special messenger to his wife, to inform her of what had happened, as well as of his present sad condition. Donna Helena soon arrived at Villarejo; her mind disturbed and anxious for two different reasons: the dangerous state of her husband, and the fear that on seeing me again, she might revive an imperfectly extinguished flame. This agitated her terribly. ‘Madam,’ said Don Blas to her, when she came into his presence, ‘you are just in time to receive my last farewell. I am about to die, and I regard my death as a punishment from Heaven for having deceived you and snatched you from Don Gaston. Far from murmuring at it, I myself exhort you to restore to him a heart of which I



robbed him.' Donna Helena answered him only by her tears ; and indeed it was the best answer she could give, for I was not yet sufficiently effaced from her memory ; nor had she forgotten the artifice her husband had used whereby she had been induced to break faith with me.

“ It came to pass as the surgeon had predicted, and in less than three days Combados died of his wounds, while mine promised to be speedily healed. The young widow, solely occupied by the task of removing her husband's body to Coria, in order to render to it all the honours due to his ashes, set out from Villarejo to return home, after inquiring, merely as a matter of politeness, how I was. As soon as I was well enough to follow her, I went to Coria, where I completely recovered in a short time. Then Donna Eleonora, my aunt, and Don George de Galisteo, resolved to marry Helena and me forthwith, lest fortune should again separate us by some new mischance. But the marriage took place in private, on account of the too recent death of Don Blas, and a few days later I returned to Madrid with Donna Helena. As I had exceeded the leave of absence granted me by the Count-Duke, I feared that the minister might have given to another gentleman the lieutenancy he had promised me ; but he had not disposed of it, and he was good enough to accept the excuses which I proffered for my delay.

“Thus I am a lieutenant in the Spanish Guards,” continued Cogollos, “and I like my position. I have made several very nice friends, and we pass our time as happy as the day is long.” “I wish I could say as much!” exclaimed Don Andrea; “but I am far from being content with my lot; I have lost my place, which was of some advantage to me, and I have no friends of sufficient influence to procure me another substantial one.” “Pardon me, Don Andrea,” I broke in with a smile, “you have in me a friend who may be of some use to you. I have already told you that I am still a greater favourite of the Count-Duke than I ever was of the Duke of Lerma, and you dare tell me to my face that you have no friend who can procure you a substantial appointment! Have I not already rendered you a similar service? Remember that, through the influence of the Archbishop of Grenada, I secured you a nomination to a post in Mexico where you would have made your fortune, if love had not detained you in Alicante. I am now in a much better position to serve you, since the Prime-Minister listens to what I say to him.” “Then I put myself in your hands,” replied Tordesillas, “but,” he added, smiling in his turn, “pray do not send me to New Spain. I should not like to go there, even to be made President of the High Court<sup>1</sup> of Mexico.”

<sup>1</sup> The original has *l'Audience*.

At this point in our conversation we were interrupted by Donna Helena, who came into the room, and whose graceful form fulfilled the charming conception I had entertained of her. "Madam," said Cogollos, "allow me to introduce to you Señor de Santillana, of whom you have heard me speak, and whose pleasant company often solaced my sorrows whilst I was imprisoned." "Yes, madam," I said to Donna Helena, "Don Gaston truly admits that my conversation pleased him, because it always turned on you." Don George's daughter replied modestly to my polite speech; after which I took leave of the newly married couple, declaring that I was delighted that matrimony had at last crowned their long attachment. Then, addressing Tordesillas, I begged him to tell me where he lived; and when he had done this, I said—"I will not bid you farewell, Don Andrea. I hope that within a week you shall perceive that I have the power as well as the will to serve my friends."

Nor were these mere words. On the very next day the Count-Duke gave me an opportunity of obliging Tordesillas. "Santillana," his Excellency said, "the post of governor of the royal prison of Valladolid is vacant; it is worth more than three hundred pistoles a year, and I think I'll give it to you." "I do not desire it, my lord," I replied; "not even if it were worth ten thousand ducats; I do not

want any post which I could not fill without leaving you." "But," replied the minister, "you can easily fill this one, without being obliged to leave Madrid, except to go occasionally to Valladolid, to visit the prison ; and that, as you perceive, is not incompatible with your remaining with me." "Whatever your Excellency may say," I rejoined, "I will only accept this post on condition of resigning it in favour of an honest gentleman, named Don Andrea de Tordesillas, formerly keeper of the tower of Segovia. I should like to give him this place as an acknowledgement of the kind treatment which I received from him during my imprisonment."

This speech made the minister laugh, and he said—"That is to say, Gil Blas, that you wish to make a governor of a royal prison as you have made a viceroy. Well, so be it, my friend, I give you the vacant post for Tordesillas. But, tell me frankly, what advantage will you receive from it ; for I do not think you such a fool as to use your influence for nothing." "My lord," I replied, "must a man not pay his debts ? Don Andrea was as kind to me as he could be, without charging any interest for it ; and ought I not to do the same to him ?" "You have become very disinterested, Mr de Santillana," replied his Excellency with a laugh ; "it seems to me that you were far less so under the last administration." "I



admit it," I rejoined; "bad examples corrupted my principles; and as everything was then for sale, I fell in with the prevailing custom; as everything is now given away, I have resumed my integrity."

I therefore obtained the governorship of the royal prison of Valladolid for Don Andrea de Tordesillas; and I sent him, shortly afterwards, to that town, as much pleased with his new situation, as I was at having discharged the obligations which I owed him.

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## CHAPTER XIV.

SANTILLANA VISITS THE POET NUNEZ. WHAT PERSONS HE FOUND WITH HIM, AND WHAT CONVERSATION THEY HELD.

ONE afternoon I took it into my head to go and see the poet of the Asturias, feeling very curious to know how he was living. I went to the house of Don Bertrand Gomez del Ribero, and asked for Nunez. "He lives here no longer," said a servant standing at the door, "but over there," he added, pointing to a neighbouring house, "where he occupies some apartments at the back." I went thither, and crossing a small courtyard, entered a room

without hangings, where I found my friend Fabricio still at table, with five or six of his friends, whom he was that day entertaining.

They were just finishing their meal, and therefore in a fair way to begin a discussion; but as soon as they perceived me their noisy talk subsided into a dead silence. Nunez rose with eagerness to receive me, saying—"Gentlemen, this is Señor de Santillana, who is good enough to honour me with a visit; join with me in doing homage to the favourite of the Prime-Minister." At these words all the guests rose to make their best bows to me; and, thanks to the title by which I had been introduced, they one and all paid me their respects in a very polite way. Though I could neither eat nor drink, I had to sit down with them, and even respond to a toast<sup>1</sup> which they drank to me.

As my presence seemed to prevent them from continuing their conversation without any restraint, I said to them—"Gentlemen, pray do not let me disturb you; I think I have interrupted your discussion; I beg you will resume it, or I shall go." "These gentlemen," Fabricio then said, "were discussing the 'Iphigenia' of Euripides. The bachelor Melchior de Villegas, a scholar of the highest order, was asking Señor Don Jacinto de Romarate what interested him most in this

<sup>1</sup> The original has *brinde*. See bk. x. chap. ix. p. 257, note 1.

tragedy.” “That is so,” Don Jacinto observed, “and I told him that it was the parlous situation of Iphigenia.” “And I,” said the bachelor, “replied, as I am ready to prove, that this situation does not constitute the genuine interest of the piece.” “What is it then?” shouted the old licentiate, Gabriel de Leon. “It is the wind,” rejoined the bachelor.

The whole company burst out laughing at this assertion, which I could not take as serious; I fancied that Melchior had only made it to enliven the discussion. But I did not know the character of that scholar, who was a man by no means given to jesting. “Laugh as much as you please, gentlemen,” he replied coolly; “I maintain that it is the wind alone which must interest, strike, and move the passions of the spectator, and not the parlous situation of Iphigenia. Picture to yourselves,” he continued, “a large army assembled to lay siege to Troy; imagine the impatience of the leaders and soldiers to carry out their enterprise, so that they may quickly return to Greece, where they have left all they hold most dear: their household gods, their wives and their children. Meanwhile a cursed contrary wind retains them in Aulis. It seems to glue them to the harbour; and if it does not change, they will not be able to go and lay siege to the city of Priam. It is the wind,

then, which constitutes the interest of this tragedy. I side with the Greeks, I approve of their plan ; I only wish their fleet to sail, and I am indifferent to the danger of Iphigenia, since her death is a means of obtaining a favourable wind from the gods."

As soon as Villegas had finished speaking, the laughter was renewed at his expense. Nunez was sly enough to support his opinion, in order to give the jesters better sport, and they vied with one another in their bad jokes about the winds. But the bachelor, surveying them all with an apathetic and scornful look, declared that their minds were ignorant and commonplace. I expected every minute to see these gentlemen grow warm, and come to pulling each other's hair, which was the usual end of their discussions ; but I was deceived in my expectation. They were satisfied with mutual reviling, and withdrew when they had drunk and eaten their fill.

After they had gone, I asked Fabricio why he no longer lived with his treasurer, and whether they had quarrelled. "Quarrelled!" he replied ; "Heaven forbid ! I am on better terms than ever I was with Señor Don Bertrand, who has consented to my living away from him ; so I have hired these apartments in order to receive my friends, and enjoy myself with them in perfect liberty. This often happens ; for you know that I am not a



man to leave much wealth to my heirs ; and, as good luck will have it, my present circumstances enable me to give a pleasant party every day.” “ I am delighted to hear it, my dear Nunez,” I observed ; “ and I cannot help again congratulating you on the success of your last tragedy ; the eight hundred dramas of the great Lope did not bring him a quarter of the money that your ‘ Count of Saldagna ’<sup>1</sup> has earned for you.”

<sup>1</sup> Llorente says that : *depuis les temps tiès-antérieurs à l'an 1655, il existait, en Espagne, une comédie tragique, intitulée : le Comte de Saldagne*. This play, however, seems to have been written by Alvaro de Aragon Cubillo, who, according to Ticknor, flourished about 1654.



BOOK XII.





## CHAPTER I.

GIL BLAS IS SENT BY THE MINISTER TO TOLEDO.  
THE OBJECT AND THE SUCCESS OF HIS JOURNEY.

FOR nearly a month the Minister had been saying to me every day—"Santillana, the time is at hand when I shall put your skill to the proof;" yet still the time had not come. But it came at length, and his Excellency spoke to me as follows—"They say there is, in the theatrical company at Toledo, a young actress whose talents are spoken of very highly; it is reported that she dances and sings divinely, and that she carries the spectators away, through her diction; it is also said that she is lovely. Such an actress richly deserves to shine at Court. The King likes the drama,<sup>1</sup> music, and dancing; nor must he be denied the pleasure of seeing and hearing a person of such rare talents. I have therefore resolved on sending you to Toledo, to judge for yourself if she be really such a wonderful actress; I will be governed by the impression which she makes on you, and I rely upon your discernment."

I answered his Excellency that I would manage this business to his satisfaction, and

<sup>1</sup> Philip IV. had even written some plays.

made arrangements to set out with a single lackey, whom I ordered to doff the Minister's livery, in order to do secretly what we had to do; a precaution which greatly pleased his Excellency. I departed accordingly for Toledo, and, having arrived there, put up at an inn near the castle. Hardly had I dismounted, when the landlord, doubtless taking me for some country gentleman, said—"Señor, I suppose you have come to this town in order to be present at the august ceremony of the *auto-da-fé*,<sup>1</sup> which is to take place to-morrow." I answered in the affirmative, thinking it better to let him believe this, than to give him any opportunity for asking me my reasons for coming to Toledo. "You will see," he continued, "one of the finest processions that ever took place; there are said to be more than a hundred prisoners, and more than ten of them are sure to be burned."

And in fact, next morning, before sunrise, I heard all the bells in the town ringing their peals, to inform the people that the *auto-da-fé* was about to begin. Curious to behold this awful ceremony, which I had never yet seen, I hurriedly dressed myself, and proceeded

<sup>1</sup> An *auto-da-fé*, an act of faith, is a public execution of the sentences of the Inquisition on heretics. The Countess d'Aulnoy describes a very grand one, which took place on the occasion of the marriage of Charles II. of Spain; there is also a description of another in the *Journal du Voyage d'Espagne*, to which Lesage is under great obligations.

to the palace of the Inquisition. All about the neighbourhood, and along the streets through which the procession was to pass, there were stands erected, on one of which, after paying my money, I took my place. Scarcely had I done so when I saw the Dominicans leading the way, preceded by the banner of the Inquisition. These good fathers were immediately followed by the mournful victims whom the Holy Office intended to sacrifice during the day. These wretched creatures walked in single file, with their heads and feet bare, each having a wax taper in his hand, and his sponsor by his side.<sup>1</sup> Some wore a large scapulary of yellow cloth, studded with red Saint Andrew's crosses, and called a *san-benito*; others had on their heads *corozas*, paper caps shaped like sugar-loaves, covered with flames and figures of imps.<sup>2</sup>

As I was looking very attentively at these unfortunate creatures, with a compassion which I took good care not to betray, lest it should be imputed to me as a crime, I thought I recognised amongst those whose heads were adorned with these *corozas* the Reverend Father Hilary and his companion, Brother Ambrose.

<sup>1</sup> The name "Sponsor" is given to persons appointed by the inquisitor to accompany the prisoners in the *auto-da-fé*, and who are held to be answerable for them. (Note by Lesage).

<sup>2</sup> These *corozas* are only worn by such of the prisoners as are condemned to be burnt. Lesage had misspelt the word and written it *carochas*.

They passed so close to me that, as it was impossible to be deceived, I said to myself—“What do I see? Heaven, then, wearied out by the crimes of these two rascals, has at last delivered them over to the authority of the Inquisition!” Whilst thus soliloquizing, I felt deeply moved and terrified; I trembled from head to foot, and my mind was so agitated that I thought I should faint. My connection with these rogues, the adventure at Xelva, everything, in short, which we had done together, returned then to my recollection, and I thought I could not sufficiently thank Heaven for having preserved me from the scapulary and the *corozas*.

When the ceremony was over I returned to my inn, shaking all over at the dreadful spectacle which I had just beheld; but the painful impressions with which my mind was filled gradually faded away, and I thought only how to carry out effectually the commission which my master had given me. I waited impatiently for the time when the theatre should be opened, for I thought that my going there was to be the first step I ought to take. As soon as that time had arrived, I went to the theatre and took my seat next to a knight of Alcantara, with whom I soon got into conversation. “Señor,” said I, “may a stranger venture to put a question to you?” “My worthy gentleman,” he replied very politely, “I shall

esteem it an honour." I resumed, "I have heard very favourable reports of the actors of Toledo; were my informants wrong in speaking so well of them?" "No," replied the knight, "the company is not bad; indeed, it contains some very fine performers, and amongst others, the beautiful Lucretia, an actress only fourteen years of age, who will astonish you. When she appears on the stage you will not require me to point her out to you, for you will easily distinguish her." I asked the knight if she was to play that evening, and he told me she would, and had a very prominent part in the piece about to be acted.

The comedy began. Two actresses came on who had neglected nothing which might contribute to render them charming; but, in spite of the glitter of their diamonds, I took neither of them for her whom I was expecting. The knight of Alcantara had so greatly prepossessed me in favour of Lucretia, that I could not fail to identify her. At length the lovely Lucretia advanced from the back of the stage, and her appearance was announced by a general thunder of applause. "Ah, here she is!" I said to myself. "What a grand air! What grace! What fine eyes! What a bewitching creature!" Indeed, I was greatly pleased with her; or rather her personal appearance made a great impression upon me. In the very first lines she uttered,



she proved herself a heaven-born actress, with an energy and intelligence beyond her age; and I readily added my applause to that which she received from the entire audience throughout the piece. "Well!" said the knight, "you see how Lucretia stands with the public?" "I am not surprised at it," I replied. "You would be still less so," he answered, "if you heard her sing. She is a Siren; woe to those who listen to her without having taken the same precautions as Ulysses! Her dancing, too," he continued, "is not less dangerous; and her movements, as captivating as her voice, delight the eyes, and compel all hearts to yield." "In that case," I exclaimed, "it must be confessed that she is a prodigy. What happy mortal has the pleasure of ruining himself for such a lovely girl?" "She has no lover," he said, "and scandal itself imputes to her no private intrigue; but she may have one for all that; for Lucretia is under the charge of her aunt Stella, who is beyond contradiction one of the most expert of all actresses."

At the name of Stella I hastily interrupted the knight, to inquire if this Stella belonged to the Toledo company. "She is one of our best actresses," he said. "She does not play to-night, and that is our loss; she generally acts waiting-women, and fills these parts to admiration. What intelligence she shows in her acting! Perhaps a little too much; but that is a

fault on the right side, and deserves to be forgiven." Then the knight told me wonderful things of this Stella; and, from the description he gave me of her, I had no doubt that she was Laura, the very same Laura whom I have mentioned so often in my story, and whom I left at Grenada.

To make assurance doubly sure, I went behind the scenes after the play was over. I asked for Stella; and in looking about, I found her in the green-room, where she was talking to sundry noblemen, who probably regarded her simply as the aunt of Lucretia. I advanced and bowed to Laura; but, whether for a whim, or out of revenge for my hurried departure from Grenada, she pretended not to know me, and received my polite bow so coolly that I was somewhat disconcerted. Instead of laughing at her cool reception, I was silly enough to be vexed at it; I even went away abruptly, and resolved in my anger to return to Madrid next day. "To avenge myself on Laura," I said, "I will not let her niece have the honour of appearing before the King. All I need do is to represent Lucretia to the Minister as I see fit; I have merely to tell him that she dances ungracefully, that her voice is too shrill, and, in short, that she has no other charms but those of youth; and I am sure his Excellency will lose his inclination to bring her to Court."

Such was the vengeance I promised myself

to wreak on Laura for her conduct towards me ; but my resentment did not last long. On the following day, as I was preparing to leave the town, a little page entered my room, and said to me : Here is a note I am to deliver to Señor de Santillana." "I am he, my lad," replied I, taking the letter. I opened it, and it contained these words—"Forget the manner in which you were received last night in the green-room, and follow the bearer." I instantly set forth with the little page, who took me to a very handsome house in the neighbourhood of the theatre; and there, in a neatly furnished room, I found Laura at her toilet.

She rose to embrace me, saying—"Señor Gil Blas, I know very well that you have no reason to be pleased with the reception which I gave you when you came and bowed to me in the green-room. Such an old friend, as you are, had a right to expect from me a warmer welcome; but let me tell you, by way of excuse, that I was in the worst possible temper. Just as you came, I was taken up with certain slanderous remarks which one of our company has been uttering about my niece, whose honour is dearer to me than my own. Your uncere-  
monious departure," she added, "suddenly made me recollect myself; and I at once told my page to follow you and find out where you lived, with the intention of making amends for my fault to-day." "You have done so already,

my dear Laura," said I; "let us say no more about it; but rather let us tell each other what has happened since the unfortunate day when the fear of a well-deserved chastisement made me quit Grenada in a hurry. I left you, you may remember, in a rather embarrassing position. How did you extricate yourself? In spite of your cleverness, I think you will admit that it was not without difficulty. Truly, you must have needed all your skill to pacify your Portuguese lover?" "Not at all," replied Laura; "do you not know that in such cases men are so weak that they sometimes spare women even the trouble of finding excuses for themselves?"

"I maintained to the Marquis of Marialva that you were my brother," she continued. "Pardon me, Señor de Santillana, if I speak to you as familiarly as ever; but I cannot get rid of old habits. Let me tell you then that I summoned up all my impudence. 'Do you not see,' I said to the Portuguese nobleman, 'that jealousy and anger have contrived this? Narcissa, my fellow-actress and rival, enraged at seeing me in quiet possession of a heart which she failed to win, has played me this trick, which I pardon her; for indeed it is natural to a jealous woman to avenge herself. She has bribed the assistant candle-snuffer, who, in order to aid her resentment, has had the effrontery to say that he saw me at Madrid, as Arsenia's



waiting-woman. Nothing can be farther from the truth ; the widow of Don Antonio Coello has always entertained sentiments too lofty to admit of her going into the service of an actress. Besides, what proves the falseness of this accusation and the conspiracy of my accusers, is the sudden disappearance of my brother. If he were here he might confound the calumny ; but no doubt Narcissa has employed some new artifice to get him out of the way.'

"Although these reasons," continued Laura, "were not the most convincing in the world, the Marquis was kind enough to be satisfied with them ; and this easy-tempered nobleman remained attached to me up to the day when he left Grenada to return to Portugal. Indeed, his departure followed your own very closely, and thus Zapata's wife had the pleasure of seeing me lose the lover of whom I had robbed her. After this, I remained a few years longer in Grenada ; then the members of our company disagreed among themselves, as will sometimes happen with us, and all the actors went different ways ; some to Seville, others to Cordova, while I came to Toledo, where I have been these ten years with my niece, Lucretia, whom you must have seen act last night, since you were in the theatre."

I could not help laughing at this part of her speech, and, on Laura asking me the reason of my mirth, I said—"Cannot you guess ? You



have neither brother nor sister, and, therefore, you cannot be Lucretia's aunt. Besides, when I calculate in my own mind the time which has passed since our last separation, and couple this with your niece's face, it strikes me that you two may be still more nearly connected."

"I understand you, Señor Gil Blas," replied Don Antonio's widow, with a slight blush; "how sharp you are in comparing dates! There is no deceiving you. Well then, my friend, Lucretia is my daughter by the Marquis of Marialva; she is the fruit of our intimacy; I can no longer conceal it from you." "What an effort you must have made, my princess," said I, "about telling me this secret, after confiding to me your goings on with the bursar of the hospital of Zamora! I must tell you, however, that Lucretia is a girl of such remarkable merit that the public cannot thank you sufficiently for making them such a present. It were to be wished that all your fellow-actresses never made a worse."

Should any evil-minded reader recall here the private interviews which I had in Grenada with Laura, when I was secretary to the Marquis of Marialva, and suspect me of being entitled to dispute with that nobleman the honour of being Lucretia's father, I must confess to my shame, that such a suspicion would be very wrong.

I, in my turn, recounted to Laura my prin-

cipal adventures, and the present state of my affairs. She listened to my story with an attention which showed me that it was not uninteresting to her, and said to me when I had ended, "Friend Santillana, it seems to me that you are playing a rather distinguished part on the world's stage. You cannot imagine how delighted I am at this. Whenever I shall take Lucretia to Madrid to endeavour to get her an engagement into the Prince's company, I flatter myself that she will find a powerful protector in Señor de Santillana." "Have no doubt of that," I replied; "you may rely upon me; you and your daughter shall be engaged into the Prince's company whenever you like. I can promise you that, without presuming too much on my influence." "I would take you at your word," replied Laura, "and set out for Madrid to-morrow, were I not bound by my engagement with this company." "An order from the Court," I replied, "can release you from your engagement,<sup>1</sup> and I undertake that you shall receive such an order within a week. I shall be very glad to take Lucretia away from a Toledo audience; such a pretty actress is fit for Court, and belongs to us by right."

Lucretia came into the room as I was finish-

<sup>1</sup> It was in France that an order from the King to play at Court released an actress from all her engagements with provincial or other managers. I am not aware whether this custom existed also in Spain in Philip IV.'s time.

ing these words. I thought I saw the goddess Hebe, so pretty and graceful she looked. She had just got up; and her natural beauty, resplendent without the aid of art, presented a delightful picture. "Come, niece," said her mother, "come and thank this gentleman for his kind intentions towards us; he is an old friend of mine, who has great influence at Court, and who undertakes to get us both engaged in the Prince's company." These words seemed to please the young girl, who made me a low curtsy, and said with an enchanting smile—"I most humbly thank you for your kind intention; but, Señor, I am not sure that such an engagement will be to my advantage. You intend to remove me from an audience which is partial to me; but are you quite certain that I shall not displease the Madrid public? Perhaps I may lose by the change. I remember hearing my aunt say that she has seen actors be favourites in one town and be disliked in another; and this makes me tremble. Take care you do not expose me to the derision of the Court, and yourself to its reproaches." "Lovely Lucretia," I replied, "neither of us need fear that. I am rather afraid that, by inflaming all hearts, you will cause dissensions amongst our highest noblemen." "My niece's fear," said Laura, "is better founded than your own; but I hope that they both will prove vain. If Lucretia

does not astonish by her personal charms, still her talents as an actress are not bad enough to deserve contempt."

We carried on this conversation for some time longer, and I could gather, from Lucretia's share in it, that she was a girl of a superior mind. Then I took leave of the two ladies, and assured them that they should soon have an order from the Court to repair to Madrid.

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## CHAPTER II.

SANTILLANA GIVES AN ACCOUNT OF HIS MISSION TO THE MINISTER, WHO ENTRUSTS TO HIM THE TASK OF SENDING FOR LUCRETIA. THE ARRIVAL OF THIS ACTRESS IN MADRID, AND HER FIRST APPEARANCE BEFORE THE COURT.

ON my return to Madrid I found the Count-Duke very impatient to learn the success of my journey. "Gil Blas," he said, "have you seen this actress, and is she worth the trouble of bringing her to Court?" "My lord," I replied, "fame, which generally praises beautiful women too highly, does not speak well enough of the youthful Lucretia. She is worthy of all admiration, both for her beauty and for her talents." "Is it possible," exclaimed the minister, with a heart-felt pleasure which I read in his eyes,









and which made me think that it was on his own account that he had sent me to Toledo, "is it possible that she is so lovely as you say?" "When you see her," I rejoined, "you will confess that no verbal picture can do justice to her charms." "Santillana," replied his Excellency, "give me a faithful account of your journey; I shall be glad to hear it." Then, for my master's satisfaction, I told him everything, not excepting even the history of Laura. I informed him that the father of Lucretia was the Marquis of Marialva, a Portuguese nobleman, who, stopping at Grenada in the course of his travels, had fallen in love with Laura. Finally, when I had given his Highness the details of what had passed between the actresses and myself, he said—"I am delighted that Lucretia is the daughter of a man of rank. This interests me in her still more, and we must bring her here. But, my friend, I give you one piece of advice. Go on as you have begun, and do not let my name appear in the matter; let all be done through Gil Blas of Santillana."

I went to look for Carnero, to whom I said that his Excellency wished him to make out an order for the admission of Stella and Lucretia, actresses from the Toledo theatre, into his Majesty's company. "Oh, certainly! Señor de Santillana," replied Carnero with an arch smile, "you shall soon be satisfied, since, to all

appearances you take such an interest in these two ladies. At the same time I hope that the public may also profit by my doing what you wish." Then the secretary drew up the order himself, and gave me the document, which I at once sent to Stella by the same servant who had accompanied me to Toledo. Within a week the mother and daughter arrived at Madrid, and went to live in furnished apartments, quite close to the Prince's theatre. They immediately sent me word of their arrival, and I went straight to their house, where, after numberless offers of service on my part, and as many thanks on theirs, I left them to prepare for their first public appearance, which I hoped would be brilliant and successful.

Their names were announced in the bills, as two new actresses received into the Prince's company by order of the Court, and they made their first appearance in a play which they had often acted successfully at Toledo.

In what part of the world is not novelty on the stage acceptable? On the day of their *début* the house was extraordinarily crowded, and it may be taken for granted that I was not absent. I was rather frightened before the curtain drew up; for, prepossessed as I was in favour of the talents both of mother and daughter, I trembled, so great was my interest in them. But they had hardly opened their

mouths before all my fear was scattered by the applause they received. Stella was considered a consummate comic actress, and Lucretia a prodigy in love-parts. The latter won every heart. Some admired the beauty of her eyes, others were touched by the sweetness of her voice, and all, smitten by her graces, and by the brilliancy of her youth, went away charmed by her personal attractions.

The Count-Duke, who was still more concerned about the first appearance of this actress than I had expected him to be, was at the theatre that evening. I saw him leave at the end of the performance, highly pleased, as it seemed to me, by our two actresses. Curious to know if he was really favourably impressed, I followed him to his house, and, going into his study, which he had just entered, I said—"Well, my lord, is your Excellency satisfied with little Marialva?" "My Excellency," he replied with a smile, "would be very hard to please, if it refused to confirm the suffrages of the public. Yes, my dear fellow, your journey to Toledo has been fortunate; I am charmed with your Lucretia, and I have no doubt that the King will be pleased when he sees her."

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## CHAPTER III.

LUCRETIA IS MUCH SPOKEN OF AT COURT, AND APPEARS BEFORE THE KING, WHO FALLS IN LOVE WITH HER. THE CONSEQUENCES OF THIS PASSION.

THE first appearance of these new actresses was soon bruited about at Court; on the very next day it was spoken of at the royal levee. A few noblemen were extolling young Lucretia in particular, and drew such a fine picture of her, that the monarch was struck by it; but, dissimulating the impression which their words produced on him, he remained silent, and feigned not to pay any attention to them.

However, as soon as he found himself alone with the Count-Duke, he asked him who this actress was whom everybody praised so highly. The minister replied that she was quite young, had been playing at Toledo, and the evening before had made her first appearance with much success. "Her name is Lucretia," he added, "a very suitable name for persons of her profession. She is an acquaintance of Santillana's, who spoke so highly of her that I thought it right to admit her into your Majesty's company." The King smiled when he heard my name; perhaps he remembered at the moment that it was I who had intro-



duced him to Catalina, and had a presentiment that I should render him the same service on this occasion. "Count," he said to the minister, "I should like to see this Lucretia act to-morrow, and will thank you to tell her so."

The Count-Duke, having repeated this conversation to me, and informed me of the King's intention, sent me with this intelligence to our two actresses, whither I went in all haste. "I have come," I said to Laura, whom I met first, "to bring you an important piece of news; to-morrow you will have the sovereign of the kingdom among your audience. The minister has bidden me tell you so. I have no doubt that your daughter and you will do your best to prove yourselves worthy of the honour which his Majesty is minded to do you; but I would advise you to choose a play with music and dancing that he may have an opportunity of admiring all Lucretia's accomplishments." "We shall follow your advice," Laura replied; "we shall take care not to forget it, and it will not be our fault if the Prince be disappointed." "That can scarcely happen," I said, as I saw Lucretia coming in, in an undress which showed her off to more advantage than the most gorgeous stage costume. "He will be all the more pleased with your lovely niece, because he likes dancing and singing beyond everything. He might even be tempted to

throw his handkerchief at her." "I do not at all wish that he should be tempted to do that," replied Laura; "all-powerful monarch as he is he might find obstacles in the fulfilment of his desires. Lucretia, though brought up behind the scenes, is virtuous; and whatever pleasure she may feel at being applauded on the stage, she had much rather be considered a modest girl than a good actress."

"Aunt," little Marialva then said, joining in the conversation, "why do you raise ideal monsters in order to combat them? I shall never be at the pain of rejecting the King's advances; the refinement of his taste will save him from the reproaches he would deserve if he lowered his eyes to me." "But, charming Lucretia," I said, "if it should happen that the King wished to love you and choose you for his mistress, would you be so cruel as to let him languish in your chains like an ordinary lover?" "Why not?" she replied. "Yes, certainly I should; and to say nothing of virtue, I feel that my vanity would be more flattered by having resisted his passion than if I had yielded to it." I was not a little astonished to hear a pupil of Laura's speak in this fashion; and I left the ladies, praising the latter for having educated the other so well.

Next evening, the King, impatient to see Lucretia, went to the theatre. The piece that was acted was interspersed with songs and

dances, in which our young actress showed off to the best advantage. From beginning to end I kept my eyes fixed on the King, and tried to divine the nature of his thoughts; but he set my penetration at defiance by an air of gravity which he affected to maintain throughout. I did not know what I was anxious to learn, until the following day. "Santillana," the minister then said to me, "I have just left the King, who has been talking to me about Lucretia with so much animation, that I doubt not but he is smitten by that young actress; as I told him that it was you who were the cause of her coming from Toledo, he expressed a wish to confer with you on that subject in private. Go straight to the door of his room, where already orders have been given to admit you. Make haste, and return at once to give me an account of the conversation."

I hurried instantly to the King, whom I found alone. He was striding up and down the room whilst waiting for me, and seemed to be greatly perplexed. He put several questions to me about Lucretia, whose story he made me tell him, and then asked me if the little lady had not already been engaged in some love affair. I boldly assured him that she had not, in spite of the rashness of such assurances, which seemed to give the Prince much pleasure. "That being so," he replied, "I select you as my agent with Lucretia. Let her become

acquainted with her conquest from your lips. Go and tell her so in my name," he added, putting in my hands a jewel-box in which were precious stones worth above fifty thousand crowns, "and beg her also to accept this present, as an earnest of more substantial proofs of my affection."

Before acquitting myself of this commission, I went back to the Count-Duke, to whom I gave a faithful account of what the King had said to me. I fancied that the minister would be more vexed than rejoiced at it; for I thought he himself was in love with Lucretia, and that it would annoy him to hear that his master had become his rival; but I was mistaken. Far from seeming mortified, he was so pleased that, unable to restrain himself, he let fall some words which were not quite lost on the hearer. "Ha! I have you now, Philip!" he exclaimed; "now, at least, business will frighten you!" This outburst revealed to me the whole plot of the Count-Duke. I saw now that his lordship, fearing that the Prince should apply himself to serious business, was endeavouring to amuse him with those pleasures which were better suited to his disposition. "Santillana," he presently said to me, "lose no time; make haste, my friend, to execute the important commission given to you, which many noblemen at court would be proud to perform. Remember," he continued, "that there is now



no Count of Lemos to deprive you of the greater part of the honour acquired by such a service ; the whole of that honour and of the emoluments will be exclusively your own."

Thus did his Excellency gild the pill, which I swallowed quietly, but not without tasting its bitterness ; for since my imprisonment I had accustomed myself to look at things from a moral point of view, and I did not think the post of Mercury-in-chief quite as honourable as it was described. Yet, if I was not vicious enough to discharge it without remorse, neither had I sufficient virtue to refuse to fill it. I, therefore, obeyed the King all the more readily, because I saw at the same time that my obedience would be agreeable to the minister, whom it was my only desire to please.

I decided to go first of all to Laura, and to converse with her in private. I explained my errand to her as delicately as I could, and at the end of my speech presented the jewel-box, by way of peroration. At the sight of the precious stones, the lady, unable to conceal her joy, suffered it to break forth freely—"Señor Gil Blas," she cried, "it is not before the best and oldest of my friends that I need put a constraint on myself. I should do wrong to assume a mock severity of morals, and to play the hypocrite with you. Yes, you need not doubt it," she continued, "I am delighted that my daughter has made such a valuable conquest,



and perceive all its advantages. But, between ourselves, I am afraid that Lucretia will regard it in a different light. Though born and bred on the stage, she has, as I told you, such a lofty notion of virtue, that already she has rejected the suit of two wealthy and amiable young noblemen. You will tell me," she continued, "that these lords are not kings; I admit it; and probably the passion of a crowned lover will overcome Lucretia's virtue; but I cannot help informing you that it is doubtful, and I must frankly declare to you that I will not put any constraint on my daughter. If, far from thinking herself honoured by the transient affection of the King, she regards that honour as an infamy, let not that great monarch be offended at her declining his suit. Come back to-morrow," she added, "and I will tell you if you are to return with a favourable reply, or with the jewels."

I was almost certain that Laura would advise Lucretia rather to depart from the path of duty than to adhere to it, and I counted very much upon this advice. However, I learned next day with surprise that Laura had had as much difficulty in leading her daughter into evil as other mothers have in leading theirs to virtue; and, what was still more astonishing, Lucretia, after a few secret interviews with the monarch, felt so much remorse at having yielded to his desires, that she suddenly

quitted the world, and shut herself up in the Convent of the Incarnation,<sup>1</sup> where she presently fell ill, and died of grief. Laura, on her side, unable to console herself for the loss of her daughter, and for having been the cause of her death, retired to a convent of female penitents, there to do penance for the amusements of her earlier days. The young King was affected by the unlooked for flight of Lucretia; but not being of a mood to grieve long, gradually consoled himself. As for the Count-Duke, though he hardly seemed to feel much concern at this incident, he was nevertheless greatly mortified at it, as the reader will have no difficulty in believing.

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## CHAPTER IV.

### THE NEW OCCUPATION WHICH THE MINISTER GAVE TO SANTILLANA.

I ALSO felt the misfortune of Lucretia very acutely; and my remorse at having contributed to it was so great, that, regarding myself as a base wretch, in spite of the rank of the lover whose passion I had assisted, I resolved to

<sup>1</sup> The history of Lucretia is partly based upon that of Maria Calderona, an actress, and the mother of the second Don Juan of Austria. See also vol. i., INTRODUCTORY NOTICE, p. xxxiv., *e.*

abandon the Caduceus for ever. I even informed the minister of my repugnance in wielding it, and begged him to employ me in any other capacity. He seemed astonished at my virtuous conduct. "Santillana," he said, "your delicate feeling of honour charms me; and as you are such a worthy man, I will give you an occupation more suitable to your moral disposition. I am going to tell you what it is; listen attentively to the confidence I am about to repose in you.

"Some years before I came into favour," he continued, "chance one day brought under my notice a lady whose face and figure pleased me so much, that I had her traced to her home. I learned that she was a Genoese lady, named Donna Margarita Spinola, who supported herself in Madrid on no other income than her beauty. I was also told that Don Francisco de Valeasar,<sup>1</sup> an alcade of the court, rich, old, and a married man, was spending considerable sums on this mistress. This report, which should only have inspired me with contempt for her, gave me a violent desire of sharing her favours with Valeasar. Such was my fancy; and in order to satisfy it, I had recourse to a female go-between, who was clever enough in a short time to procure me a private interview with the Genoese lady. This interview was succeeded by several others; so that my rival and

<sup>1</sup> The real name of this gentleman was Valcarcel.

I were equally well treated for our gifts. Perhaps she may even have had some other lover as favoured as ourselves.

“Be that as it may, Margarita, whilst receiving such promiscuous homage, became a mother in the fulness of time, and gave birth to a boy, the credit of which she chose to attribute to each of her lovers in particular; but as none of us could conscientiously boast of being the father of her child, none would acknowledge it; so that the Genoese lady was obliged to support him on the profits of her profession. This she did for eighteen years, after which she died, and left her son without a penny, and what is worse, without any education.

“That,” continued his Excellency, “is what I had to confide to you, and I will now tell you the great plan I have formed. I intend to lift this unfortunate child out of his present obscurity, transport him from the lowest step of the social ladder to the topmost, acknowledge him as my son, and raise him to the highest honours.”

I could not be silent on hearing such an extravagant project. “What, my lord,” I exclaimed, “is it possible that your Excellency has taken such a strange resolution? Excuse the expression which has escaped me, and only sprang from my zeal.” “You will think it a sensible one,” he replied hastily, “when I shall have told you the motives which have impelled

me to take it. I do not want my estates to be inherited by collateral heirs. You will tell me that I am not old enough yet to despair of having children by the Countess of Olivarez. But every man is the best judge of his own condition; let it suffice you to learn that I have tried without effect all kinds of remedies, in order to become once again a father. Therefore, since fortune, coming to the rescue of nature, offers me a child, whose father I possibly may be after all, I will adopt him; that I am resolved to do."

When I saw that the minister had set his mind on this adoption, I ceased to oppose him, knowing him to be a man who would rather do a foolish thing than go back from his resolve. "It only remains now," he added, "to educate Don Henry Philip de Guzman, for by that name I intend him to be known in society, until he is in a position to assume the dignities awaiting him. It is you, my dear Santillana, whom I have chosen to superintend his education. I rely on your intelligence, and your attachment to me, to arrange his domestic establishment, to select for him masters of every kind, and, in a word, to make him an accomplished gentleman." I would willingly have declined this occupation, and represented to the Count-Duke that I was hardly qualified to educate young noblemen, never having followed that profession, which required more



knowledge and merit than I possessed ; but he interrupted me, and closed my mouth by saying that he was absolutely resolved that I should be tutor to his adopted son, whom he destined for the highest offices in the kingdom. I, therefore, prepared to discharge this duty in order to please his Excellency, who, to reward my compliance, increased my small income by a pension of a thousand crowns, which he procured for me, or rather which he gave me, on the commandery of Mambra.

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## CHAPTER V.

THE SON OF THE GENOESE LADY IS ACKNOWLEDGED BY A FORMAL DEED, AND NAMED DON HENRY PHILIP DE GUZMAN. SANTILLANA FORMS THE DOMESTIC ESTABLISHMENT OF THE YOUNG NOBLEMAN, AND SELECTS FOR HIM MASTERS OF EVERY KIND.

ACCORDINGLY it was not long before the Count-Duke acknowledged the son of Donna Margarita Spinola, and the official document was executed with the sanction and by favour of the King. Don Henry Philip de Guzman—for such was the name given to this child of several fathers—was therein declared sole heir

to the county of Olivarez and the duchy of San Lucar.<sup>1</sup> The Minister, to give this document all possible publicity, directed Carnero to communicate it officially to the ambassadors and grandees of Spain, who were somewhat startled at the news. The wags of Madrid found in it a source of amusement for a long time, and the satirical poets did not miss such a fine opportunity of making their pens flow with gall.

I asked the Count-Duke where this youth was, whom he wished to entrust to my care. "Here in town," he replied, "with an aunt, from whom I shall remove him as soon as you have got his house ready for him." This was soon done, for I hired a mansion and had it magnificently furnished. I engaged pages, a porter, and footmen; and with the help of Caporis I appointed the necessary officers. When I had completed all my arrangements, I went to inform his Excellency, who sent at once for this doubtful heir and new offshoot from the branch of the Guzmans. The lad was

<sup>1</sup> Don Francisco Valcarcel, who was a widower, had really married Donna Margarita Spinola when she was pregnant, and adopted the child, who, after many years, was acknowledged by the Count-Duke, then without legitimate heirs male, as his son, and created Marquis of Mairena. In Spain, illegitimate children were at that time nearly as much considered as legitimate ones. There was a proverb, according to the *Mémoires curieux, En Castilla el cavillo eleva la silla*, which is translated, *En Castille vieille et nouvelle, le cheval porte la selle*, and was applied to show that only the father of illegitimate children had to be considered.

tall, and had a tolerably pleasant countenance. "Don Henry," said his Highness to him, pointing to me, "this gentleman is to be your tutor whom I have selected to teach you the ways of the world; he has my entire confidence and absolute authority over you. Yes, Santillana," he added, addressing me, "I entrust him into your hands, and doubtless you will give me a good account of him." To these words the minister added others, by way of exhorting the young man to conform himself to my wishes; after which I took Don Henry with me to his mansion.

As soon as we had arrived there, I introduced him to every one of his servants, and explained the nature of their various occupations. He did not seem at all overcome by the change in his condition; and, readily accommodating himself to the assiduous deference which was paid to him, he looked as though he had always been what he had only become by chance. He was not without intelligence, but he was grossly ignorant, being hardly able to read and write. I gave him a tutor to teach him the rudiments of the Latin tongue, and engaged masters for geography, history, and fencing. You may be sure that I did not forget a dancing-master: my only embarrassment was to select one, for there were at that time a great number of eminent ones in Madrid, and I did not know to whom to give the preference.

Whilst I was pondering on this difficulty I saw a man very richly dressed entering the courtyard of our mansion, and was told that he wished to speak to me. I went up to him, fancying that he was at least a knight of San Iago or of Alcantara, and asked him what I could do for him. "Señor de Santillana," he replied, after a profusion of bows which smacked of his profession, "having been told that your lordship<sup>1</sup> is selecting masters for Señor Don Henry, I have come to offer you my services. My name is Martin Ligeró,<sup>2</sup> and, thank Heaven, I am a man of some repute. I am not accustomed to go about soliciting for pupils; that is all very well for petty dancing-masters. I usually wait till I am sent for; but as I have been teaching the Duke of Medina Sidonia, Don Lewis de Haro, and several other noblemen of the house of Guzman, of which I am in some sort an hereditary servant, I thought it my duty to come and tell you so." "I perceive," said I, "that you are just the man we need. What are your terms?" "Only four double pistoles a month," he replied; "that is the usual price for two lessons a week." "Four doubloons a month!" I cried; "that is very high." "Very high!" he rejoined, with an air of astonishment; "you would at least have to pay one pistole a month to a teacher of philosophy!"

<sup>1</sup> See vol. i., INTRODUCTORY NOTICE, p. xxxviii., 11.

*Ligeró* is the Spanish for "nimble, light."

There was no resisting such a quaint reply; I laughed at it heartily, and asked Señor Ligeró if he really thought that a man of his profession was to be considered of greater value than a teacher of philosophy? "Undoubtedly, I think so," said he; "we are more useful in the world than those gentlemen. What are men, before they have passed through our hands? Jointless bodies, unlicked cubs; but our lessons gradually develop them, and make them insensibly assume a proper figure. In a word, we teach them to move gracefully, we give them attitudes, noble airs, and a grave mien."

I yielded to the arguments of this dancing-master, and engaged him to teach Don Henry at the rate of four double pistoles a month, since that was the price fixed by the great masters of his art.

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## CHAPTER VI.

SCIPIO RETURNS FROM NEW SPAIN. GIL BLAS PLACES HIM IN THE SERVICE OF DON HENRY. THAT YOUNG NOBLEMAN'S COURSE OF STUDY ; THE HONOURS CONFERRED UPON HIM, AND THE LADY TO WHOM THE COUNT-DUKE MARRIED HIM. HOW GIL BLAS HAD A PATENT OF NOBILITY CONFERRED ON HIM AGAINST HIS WILL.

I HAD not yet half filled up the domestic establishment of Don Henry when Scipio returned from Mexico. I asked him if he was satisfied with his voyage, and he replied, "I ought to be, for, in addition to three thousand ducats in cash, I have brought merchandise which will sell in this country for double the amount." "I congratulate you, my dear fellow," I rejoined ; "the foundation of your fortune is laid. It rests with you to complete it by returning to India next year ; or else, if you prefer a snug berth in Madrid to the trouble of going so far to amass wealth, you have only to speak ; and I can get you one." "Oh, by all that is holy !" said the son of La Coscolina, "there is no room for hesitation. I would rather have a good post with your lordship<sup>1</sup> than risk again the dangers of a long voyage, whatever advantages I might

<sup>1</sup> See vol. 1, INTRODUCTORY NOTICE, p. xxxviii. 12°.

derive from it. Pray, master, explain yourself; what post do you intend for your servant?"

The best way of giving him this information was to tell him the story of the young nobleman whom the Count-Duke had just introduced into the Guzman family. After relating to him these curious details, and informing him that the minister had appointed me tutor to Don Henry, I offered him the situation of valet to this adopted son. Scipio, who asked for nothing better, willingly accepted the post, and filled it so well that in less than three or four days he secured the confidence and friendship of his new master.

I had imagined that the pedagogues whom I had selected to instruct the son of the Genoese lady, would find their labours in vain, for I thought that they would scarcely be able to teach him at his age; but I was mistaken. He easily comprehended and retained all that was taught him, and his masters were very well satisfied with him. I was anxious to communicate this news to the Count-Duke, and he was very glad when he heard it. "Santillana," he exclaimed, quite enraptured, "you delight me by telling me that Don Henry has a good memory and is not wanting in capacity. I recognise my own blood in him; and, what finally persuades me that he is my son, is, that I feel as much affection for him, as though the Countess had borne him. Hence you see, my

friend, that the voice of nature will make itself heard." I did not care to tell his Excellency my opinion on that subject; but I respected his weakness, and allowed him to enjoy the pleasure of thinking himself Don Henry's father.

Though all the Guzmans entertained a deadly hatred of this young nobleman of yesterday, they were politic enough to dissemble it; nay, some of them even affected to court his friendship. The ambassadors and principal nobles, who were then in Madrid, went to visit him, and paid him all the honours which they would have bestowed on a legitimate son of the Count-Duke. That minister, delighted to see his idol thus worshipped, soon heaped endless dignities on him. He began by asking the King for the order of Alcantara for Don Henry, with a commandery worth ten thousand crowns. Shortly afterwards, he had him appointed gentleman of the bed-chamber; then, having resolved to marry him, and wishing to give him the hand of a lady of the noblest family in Spain, he cast his eyes on Donna Juana de Velasco, daughter of the Duke of Castile, and his influence was sufficient to get her married to Don Henry, in spite of the Duke and her relatives.

Some days before this marriage his Excellency sent for me, and said, as he placed some papers in my hands—"Gil Blas, I have a new present to make you, which, I think, will

not be displeasing to you. Here is a patent of nobility which I have had drawn up for you." "My lord!" I replied, much surprised at these words, "your Excellency knows that I am the son of a duenna and of an *escudero*; it seems to me that it would be a profanation of the nobility to confer it on me. Of all the favours which His Majesty could grant me, this is the one which I deserve and desire the least." "The objection about your birth," replied the minister, "is easily removed. You have been employed in State affairs under the Duke de Lerma's administration and under mine; besides," he added with a smile, "have you not rendered such services to the monarch as deserve a recompense? In a word, Santillana, you are not unworthy of the honour which I wish to grant you. Moreover, and this argument is unanswerable, the position which you fill about my son's person, requires to be held by a nobleman; I will even confess that that is the reason why I have procured you a patent of nobility." "I yield, my lord," I replied, "since your Excellency insists upon it." After having said this I put my patents into my pocket and walked off.

"So now I am a nobleman!" I soliloquised, as soon as I was in the streets; "but it is not owing to my parents that the King has ennobled me. I can have myself called Don Gil Blas when I please; and if any of my acquaint-

tances take it into their heads to laugh at me whilst giving me that title, I will show them my patent. But, let me see what it contains," I continued, drawing it from my pocket, "let me just see how they purify my plebeian blood." I therefore perused my patent, which ran thus: That the King, in acknowledgment of the zeal which I had displayed on more than one occasion for his service, and for the weal of the State, had thought proper to confer on me a patent of nobility. I may venture to say, in my own praise, that it inspired me with no pride. Keeping ever before my eyes my lowly origin, this honour humbled me rather than made me vain, and I accordingly resolved to lock up my patent in a drawer, and not to boast of possessing it.

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## CHAPTER VII.

GIL BLAS HAPPENS TO MEET FABRICIO AGAIN. THEIR  
LAST CONVERSATION TOGETHER, AND THE IM-  
PORTANT INFORMATION WHICH NUNEZ GAVE  
TO SANTILLANA.

My readers may perhaps have observed that the poet of the Asturias, easily neglected to come and see me, whilst my occupations hardly left me time to visit him; and thus I had not



met him since the day of the discussion on the "Iphigenia" of Euripides. By chance I encountered him near the Sun Gate, coming out of a printing office. I addressed him, and said—"So so! Mr Nunez, you have been at a printer's; that looks like threatening the public with some new production of yours."

"They may, in fact, expect it," he replied. "I may tell you that I have taken it into my head to compose a pamphlet just ready for publication, which will make some noise in the republic of letters." "I do not doubt the merits of your production," I rejoined; "but I wonder that you amuse yourself by writing pamphlets; it seems to me that such trifles reflect no great credit on a man of intelligence." "There are, however, some good pamphlets," replied Fabricio; "and mine, for instance, is one of these, though it has been done in a hurry; for I will confess that it is the offspring of necessity. Hunger, as you know, will break through stone walls."<sup>1</sup>

"What!" I exclaimed, "hunger! Is it the author of the 'Count of Saldanha' who makes such a speech? Can a man who has two thousand crowns a year talk thus?" "Gently, friend," interrupted Nunez; "I am no longer a poet fortunate enough to enjoy an annuity regularly paid. The affairs of the treasurer

<sup>1</sup> In the original, *la faim . . . fait sortir le loup hors du bois*; literally, "hunger makes the wolf sally out of the wood."

Don Bertrand have suddenly fallen into confusion ; he has been handling and dissipating the King's money ; all his property was seized, and my annuity is gone to the deuce." "That is a sad affair," said I ; "but have you no longer any hope from that quarter?" "Not the slightest," he rejoined ; "Señor Gomez del Ribero is as poor as his poet, and utterly ruined ; they say he will never hold up his head again."

"In that case, my friend," I replied, "I must get you some post to console you for the loss of your annuity." "I will spare you that trouble," he said ; "if you were to offer me a place of three thousand crowns in a government office, I should refuse it. The duties of a clerk are not suited to the genius of a child of the Muses, who, like myself, only cares for literature. In short, I am born to live and die a poet, and I will fulfil my destiny."

"Besides, do not suppose that we are very unhappy," he continued. "Not only do we live in complete independence, but we lead a gay and careless life. It is supposed that we often fare but poorly,<sup>1</sup> but that is a mistake. There is not one of my fraternity, not even excepting almanack-makers, who is not a wel-

<sup>1</sup> The original has, *que nous faisons souvent des repas de Démocrite* ; literally, "that we often have dinners like those of Democritus ;" a proverbial saying, somewhat like the English "to dine with duke Humphrey."

come guest at some substantial table.' As for me, there are a couple of first-class houses where I am well received, and am always sure of finding a knife and fork laid; one is at a well-to-do chief commissioner of taxes, to whom I have dedicated a novel, and the other with a rich citizen of Madrid, who likes to have always men of intelligence at his board. Fortunately he is not very fastidious in his choice, and the town furnishes him as many as he desires."

"Then I cease to pity you," I said to the poet of the Asturias, "since you are satisfied with your condition. However, I assure you once more that Gil Blas will always be your friend, in spite of your neglect in coming to see him. If you need my purse, come boldly to me; do not let false shame deprive you of an assistance on which you may reckon, and do not deny me the pleasure of obliging you."

"I recognise you, Santillana," exclaimed Nunez, "by that outburst of generous feeling; and I thank you a thousand times for the favourable disposition which I see you entertain towards me. To show you my gratitude I will offer you a salutary piece of advice. So long as the Count-Duke is all-powerful, and while you are still his favourite, make the best of the opportunity, and hasten to enrich yourself; for I have been told that this minister is beginning to totter." I asked Fabricio if he had heard that on good authority, and

he answered—"My information comes from an old knight of Calatrava, who has a special talent for discovering the greatest secrets. He is listened to as an oracle; and this is what I heard him say yesterday: 'The Count-Duke has a great number of enemies who are banded together to ruin him; he reckons too much on his ascendancy over the King's mind, for it is asserted that the monarch begins to hearken to complaints which have already reached him.'"

I thanked Nunez for his friendly warning, but I paid slight attention to it; and returned to my house, persuaded that my master's authority was too firm to be shaken, and comparing him to one of those old oaks which have taken root in a forest, and which no storm is able to overthrow.

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## CHAPTER VIII.

HOW GIL BLAS LEARNED THAT THE HINT GIVEN  
BY FABRICIO WAS NOT WITHOUT FOUNDATION.  
THE KING'S JOURNEY TO SARAGOSSA.

HOWEVER, what the poet of the Asturias had told me was not without foundation. Within the palace a secret conspiracy was planned against the Count-Duke, whereof, it was said, the Queen was the head; and yet none of the

measures which the confederates took to get rid of the minister transpired to the public. More than a year, in fact, passed from the time I had received Fabricio's warning before I perceived that the Count's influence had received the slightest shock.

But the revolt of the Catalonians, encouraged by France, and the ill success of the campaign against these rebels, caused the people to murmur and complain of the government. These complaints gave rise to a council being held before the King, at whose request the Marquis of Grana, the Emperor's ambassador at the Court of Spain, was likewise present. The question arose whether it was better for the King to remain in Castile, or to go to Aragon, to show himself to his troops. The Count-Duke, who did not wish the King to join the army, spoke first, and he represented that it was not consonant with the King's majesty to leave the principal town of his dominions; basing his opinion on all the arguments which his eloquence could supply. He had no sooner finished speaking than his view was supported in general terms by all the members of the council, except by the Marquis of Grana, who, thinking only of his zeal for the house of Austria, and giving way to the frankness of his nation, combated the opinion of the Prime Minister, and maintained the contrary with so much force, that the



King, struck by the soundness of his arguments, adopted his advice, though it was opposed to the votes of his whole council, and fixed the day for his departure to the army.

It was the first time in his life that the monarch had ventured to differ from his favourite, who was deeply mortified by an innovation which he regarded as a desperate insult. Just as the minister was withdrawing to his own room to fret and fume at leisure, he espied me, called me, took me into his study with him, and related with much discomposure what had passed at the council. Then, like a man who could not recover from his surprise, he continued—"Yes, Santillana, the King, who for more than twenty years has only spoken by my mouth and seen through my eyes, has preferred Grana's advice to mine: and how did he show this preference? By heaping praises on this ambassador, and specially lauding his zeal for the house of Austria, as though that German had more of it than I!"

"It is easy to perceive from this," pursued the minister, "that there is a party formed against me; and I have every reason to think that the Queen is at the head of it." "But, your Excellency," I said, "why are you so anxious, and why do you fear the Queen? Has not that Princess been wont for upwards of twelve years to see you manage all public

business, and have you not accustomed the King never to take counsel of her? As for the Marquis of Grana, His Majesty may have taken his advice from a desire to see the army, and to go through a campaign." "You are wrong in your surmise," the Count-Duke interrupted; "tell me rather that my enemies hope that the King, in the midst of his troops, and continually surrounded by the great noblemen who accompany him, will find among these, more than one, on sufficiently bad terms with me, to venture on expressions unfavourable to my administration. But they will find out their mistake," he continued; "for I will take care to prevent the monarch from receiving the visits of any nobleman during the journey." And so he did, in a manner which deserves not to be passed over.

The day of the King's departure having arrived, His Majesty, after having appointed the Queen regent during his absence, took the road to Saragossa; but before he arrived there he passed through Aranjuez,<sup>1</sup> which place he found so delightful that he stayed there nearly three weeks. From Aranjuez the minister arranged that the King should go to Cuença; where he amused him for a still longer period with the diversions provided for him. Then the pleasures of the

<sup>1</sup> Aranjuez, a royal palace in New Castile, surrounded by hills and forests.

chase occupied this Prince at Molina in Aragon; after which he went to Saragossa. The army was near at hand, and he prepared to repair to it, but the Count-Duke dissuaded him, by making him believe that he would be putting himself in danger of being captured by the French, who were masters of the plain of Moncon. The King accordingly, alarmed by a danger which was groundless, determined to remain shut up in his house as in a prison. The minister, taking advantage of his terror, and pretending to provide for his safety, kept him, as it were, never out of his sight; so that the principal nobility, who had incurred vast expense in equipping themselves to follow their sovereign, had not even the satisfaction of being received by him. At length Philip, tired of his indifferent residence at Saragossa, and of passing his time there still more indifferently, or, if you like, of being a prisoner, soon returned to Madrid. Thus did the monarch end his campaign, leaving to his commander-in-chief, the Marquis de los Velez, the care of sustaining the honour of the Spanish arms.<sup>1</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> The whole of this chapter is historically true.

## CHAPTER IX.

THE REVOLUTION IN PORTUGAL, AND THE DISGRACE  
OF THE COUNT-DUKE.

A FEW days after the King's return an alarming report prevailed at Madrid. It was stated that the Portuguese, considering the revolt of the Catalonians as a good opportunity offered them by fortune for casting off the Spanish yoke, had availed themselves of it, had taken up arms, and chosen the Duke of Braganza for their King; that they were resolved to support him on the throne, and were confident of gaining their ends, as Spain had at that time her hands full with enemies in Germany, Italy, Flanders, and Catalonia. In fact, they could not have found a more favourable opportunity for ridding themselves of a detested rule.<sup>1</sup>

It was a singular circumstance that whilst the Court and the town seemed overwhelmed by this news, the Count-Duke attempted to jest with the King at the expense of the Duke of Braganza; but ill-timed jokes generally turn

<sup>1</sup> The revolution of Portugal against Spain happened in 1640, and was conducted with such secrecy, that though the projected rising had been known for more than a year to many hundred persons, the Duke of Braganza was declared king, and the Spanish yoke shaken off in one day, throughout the whole of the Portuguese dominions.

against those who indulge in them. Philip, far from falling in with the minister's incongruous witticisms, assumed a grave manner which disconcerted the Count, and gave him a presentiment of his disgrace. The minister no longer doubted his downfall, when he learned that the Queen had openly declared against him, and loudly accused him of having caused the Portuguese revolt by his bad administration. Most of the noblemen, and especially those who had been at Saragossa, no sooner saw that a storm was brewing over the Count-Duke's head, than they joined the Queen's party; but what gave the finishing blow to his influence, was that the dowager-duchess of Mantua, who had been lately at the head of the government of Portugal, returned from Lisbon to Madrid, and clearly showed the King that the revolution in that kingdom had happened entirely through the fault of his Prime Minister.

The report, made by this princess, produced a deep impression on the mind of the monarch, who, recovering at last from his infatuation for his favourite, entirely lost any affection which he had entertained for him. When the minister was informed that the King gave ear to his enemies, he thought fit to write him a letter in which he asked permission to resign his post, and to quit the Court, since all the misfortunes which had befallen the kingdom during



his administration had been unjustly laid to his charge. He fancied that this letter would produce a great effect, believing that the King still retained sufficient friendship for him to be unwilling to consent to his leaving the Court; but the only reply which his Majesty gave him was to grant him the permission which he asked, as well as to suffer him to withdraw whithersoever he chose.

This reply, in the King's own hand-writing, came like a thunder-stroke on his Excellency, who had not at all expected it. Nevertheless, though he was overwhelmed by it, he assumed an appearance of firmness, and asked me what I would do in his place. "I should not be long in forming a decision," I said; "I should leave the Court, and repair to one of my estates, there to spend the remainder of my days in peace." "Your advice is sensible," my master replied, "and I am resolved to end my days at Loeches, after I have had one more interview with the monarch. I should like to convince him that I have done all man could do to bear worthily the heavy burden with which I was charged; but that it was out of my power to prevent the sad events which are imputed to me as a crime. It would be just as reasonable to blame a skilful pilot, who, in spite of all his efforts, sees his vessel driven about by the winds and waves." The minister still flattered himself, that, by speak-

ing to the monarch, he might accommodate matters, and regain his lost ground ; but he could not obtain an audience ; and, moreover, he was required to give up the key, with which he had been accustomed to enter the royal apartments whenever he wished.

Perceiving, now, that there was no longer any hope for him, he fully resolved on his retirement. He looked over his papers, of which he prudently burned a goodly number ; then he mentioned what officers of his household and servants were to follow him, gave orders for his departure, and fixed it for the next day. As he feared to be insulted by the populace on leaving the palace, he slipped away early in the morning by the kitchen door, got into a shabby carriage with his confessor and myself, and set out without hindrance for Loeches, a village of which he was lord of the manor, and where the Countess, his wife, had built a splendid convent for Dominican nuns. We reached this place in less than four hours, whilst all the members of his household arrived there shortly after us.

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## CHAPTER X.

THE ANXIETY AND CARES WHICH AT FIRST TROUBLED THE REPOSE OF THE COUNT-DUKE, AND THE HAPPY CALM WHICH SUCCEEDED THEM. THE OCCUPATIONS OF THIS MINISTER IN HIS RETREAT.

THE Countess of Olivarez did not set out with her husband for Loeches, but remained at Court a few days longer, endeavouring by her tears and entreaties to secure his recall. But it was in vain that she prostrated herself before their Majesties. The King paid no heed to her remonstrances, though they were prepared with art; and the Queen, who hated her mortally, saw her tears flow with pleasure. However, the minister's wife did not desist; she humbled herself so far as to solicit the good offices of the Queen's ladies-in-waiting; but the only fruit which she derived from her abasement was the discovery that it excited more scorn than pity. Heart-broken at having taken so many humiliating steps in vain, she rejoined her husband, to mourn with him the loss of a position which, under such a reign as that of Philip IV., was perhaps the highest in the kingdom.

The accounts which her ladyship brought of

the condition in which she had left Madrid, increased the vexation of the Count-Duke. "Your enemies," she said to him, weeping, "the Duke of Medina-Celi and the other noblemen who hate you, are loud in the King's praises for having deprived you of the ministry; and the people celebrate your disgrace with insolent joy, as though the State's misfortunes were to cease with your administration." "Madam," my master replied, "follow my example and repress your sorrows; we must yield to the storm when we cannot weather it. It is true I had thought to retain my influence to the end of my life; but this is a common delusion of ministers and favourites, who forget that their lot depends on their sovereign. Was not the Duke of Lerma as much mistaken as myself, and did he not fancy that the purple in which he was clad, was a sure guarantee of the lasting tenure of his authority?"

In this manner did the Count-Duke exhort his wife to be patient, whilst he himself was in a state of agitation, which was daily renewed by the despatches he received from Don Henry, who, having remained at Court to observe what was going on, took care to send him an exact account of everything. It was Scipio who brought the letters from this young nobleman, with whom he still lived, though I had relinquished my post on his marriage with Donna Juana. The communications of this

adopted son were always filled with bad news; and unfortunately no other could be expected. Sometimes he sent word that the principal nobles were not content with publicly rejoicing over the retirement of the Count-Duke, but that they had all combined to drive his partisans from the offices and employments which they occupied, and to have these vacancies filled by his enemies. Another time he wrote that Don Lewis de Haro began to rise in favour, and that, to all appearance, he would become Prime Minister. My master received a good deal of intelligence which must have annoyed him; but that which seemed to afflict him most, was the change in the vice-royalty of Naples, which the Court, solely to mortify him, took from the Duke of Medina de Las Torres, who was his friend, and gave to the Admiral of Castille, whom he had always hated.

It may be said that for three months his Excellency became in his solitude a prey to disappointment and regret; but his confessor, who was a Dominican monk, and added a manly eloquence to solid piety, succeeded in consoling him. By continually representing to him with energy that he ought to think of nothing but his salvation, and with the aid of the divine grace, he had the happiness of weaning his mind from the Court. His Excellency no longer wished to hear news from Madrid,



and had no care except to prepare himself for death. The Countess of Olivarez, on her part, making good use of her retirement, found in the convent which she had established, a consolation granted her by Providence. There were holy maidens amongst the nuns whose words, full of unction, gradually changed the bitterness of her life to sweetness. In proportion as my master turned his thoughts from worldly affairs, his mind became more calm, and he passed his days as follows: Almost the whole morning was spent in hearing mass said in the chapel of the convent till dinner-time; after dinner he amused himself for two hours by playing at various games with myself and a few of his most attached servants; then he generally retired alone into his closet, where he remained until sunset; and then he walked round his garden, or went for an airing in his carriage in the neighbourhood of his castle, accompanied sometimes by his confessor and sometimes by me.

One day being alone with him, and when I was admiring the serenity of his countenance, I took the liberty to say—"My lord, permit me to express my delight in observing that you are no longer discontented; I conclude that your Excellency begins to get accustomed to retirement." "I am so already," he answered, "and though I have been a long time used to busi-

ness, I protest to you that I become daily more and more attached to the agreeable and peaceful life which I lead in this place."

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## CHAPTER XI.

THE COUNT-DUKE SUDDENLY BECOMES MELANCHOLY AND PENSIVE. THE ASTONISHING CAUSE OF HIS MELANCHOLY, AND ITS SAD CONSEQUENCE.

HIS Excellency, to vary his occupations, also amused himself at times with cultivating his garden. One day, as I was looking at him at work, he said to me jestingly—"You see, Santillana, a minister banished from the Court who has become a gardener at Loeches." "My lord," I replied in the same tone, "I fancy I see Dionysius of Syracuse as a schoolmaster at Corinth." My master smiled at the reply, and was not displeased with the comparison.

Whilst we were all delighted to see our master rising superior to his disgrace, and finding charms in a life so different from that which he had always led, we perceived with grief that he was visibly undergoing a change. He became gloomy and pensive, and fell into a deep melancholy. He ceased to play at certain games with us, and no longer seemed aware of

all efforts we could think of to divert him. After dinner he shut himself up in his closet, where he remained alone until evening. We fancied that his sadness was caused by reminiscences of his past grandeur, and, therefore, sent to him the Dominican father, whose eloquence, however, could not triumph over his Highness's melancholy, which, instead of diminishing, seemed to increase.

It struck me that the sadness of the minister might have some special cause which he was unwilling to mention ; and this made me form the design of drawing his secret from him. I therefore watched for an opportunity of speaking to him, and one day when we were alone together, I said to him, with an air of mingled respect and affection—" My lord, may Gil Blas venture to put a question to his master ? " " You may," he replied ; " I give you leave." " What has become of that cheerful air which used to beam on your Excellency's countenance ? " I asked. " Do you no longer feel that superiority which you had assumed over fortune ; and does your loss of influence arouse fresh regrets within you ? Are you again plunged into that abyss of trouble whence your manliness extricated you ? " " No, thank Heaven ! " replied the minister, " my memory is no longer taken up by the part which I played at Court, and I have for ever forgotten the honours conferred

upon me." "Well, then," I rejoined, "if you have sufficient strength to dismiss these things from your remembrance, why are you weak enough to abandon yourself to a melancholy which alarms us all? What is amiss with you, my dear master?" I continued, throwing myself at his feet; "doubtless some secret sorrow preys upon you. Can you hide it from Santillana, whose discretion, zeal, and fidelity you are acquainted with? Why am I so unhappy as to have lost your confidence?"

"You still possess it," his Highness said; "but I will confess that I am loth to reveal to you the cause of the sadness in which you see me immersed. However, I cannot resist the pressing entreaties of such a servant and friend as you. Learn, then, the cause of my uneasiness; only to Santillana can I bring myself to impart such a confidence. Yes," he continued, "I am the prey of a morbid melancholy which is gradually consuming me, for almost every moment I am haunted by a spectre which appears before me in a frightful form. In vain I have argued with myself that it is but an illusion, a mere phantom without reality; its continual appearances disturb my powers of sight, and unsettle my reason. Though my understanding is strong enough to convince me that in looking on this spectre I gaze on vacancy, I am weak enough to be afflicted by the vision. This is what you have

forced me to tell you," he added ; " now judge whether I am wrong to try and conceal from everyone the cause of my melancholy."

I heard this extraordinary communication with as much grief as astonishment, for it implied a total derangement of the nervous system. " My lord," I said to the minister, " may not this arise from the small amount of nourishment which you take; for your abstinence is injudicious?" So I thought at first," he replied ; " and to discover whether my diet was the cause of it, I have been eating more than usual for some days past; but it is all to no purpose, for the phantom does not disappear." " It will disappear," I said, in order to console him ; " and if your Excellency would only divert your mind a little, by again having some games with your faithful attendants, I believe that you would soon find yourself freed from your melancholy mood."

A short time after this conversation his Excellency fell ill, and seeing that the matter was becoming serious, he sent for two notaries from Madrid, to make his will. He also called in three celebrated physicians who had the reputation of curing their patients now and then. As soon as it became known in the castle that these doctors had arrived, nothing was heard but lamentations and groans ; the death of the master was regarded as at hand, so great was the prejudice against these gentle-



men! These physicians had brought with them an apothecary and a surgeon, the usual executors of their decrees. The notaries were allowed to do their business first, after which they set about their own. They followed the principles of Dr Sangrado, and from their first consultation, ordered one blood-letting after another, so that in six days they reduced the Count-Duke to the last extremity; and on the seventh they delivered him from his vision.

After the minister's death deep and sincere grief pervaded the castle of Loeches.<sup>1</sup> All the servants lamented him bitterly. Far from being consoled for his loss by the certainty of being remembered in his will, there was not one who would not readily have renounced his legacy to bring his master back to life. As for me, whom he had loved most, and who was attached to him by a disinterested friendship, I was far more grieved than the rest. I doubt whether even Antonia cost me more tears than the Count-Duke.

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<sup>1</sup> The Count-Duke did not die at Loeches, but at Toro, in New Castile, on the 12th of July 1645. Yet in the *Anecdotes relatives à l'exil* of this minister, which saw the light in 1722, it is stated that he died at the first mentioned place. This is a new proof that Lesage chiefly consulted books of the period whilst he was writing *Gil Blas*, and did not take his novel from a Spanish manuscript.

## CHAPTER XII.

WHAT HAPPENED AT THE CASTLE OF LOECHES  
AFTER THE COUNT-DUKE'S DEATH; AND THE  
RESOLUTION TAKEN BY SANTILLANA.

ACCORDING to the minister's last injunctions, he was buried in the convent without pomp and without splendour, amidst a dirge of our lamentations. After the funeral the Countess of Olivarez ordered the will to be read, with which all the servants had good reasons to be satisfied. To every one was left a legacy proportioned to the place which he had occupied, and none was less than two thousand crowns. Mine was the most considerable of all, for his Excellency had left me ten thousand pistoles, as a proof of his particular affection for me. The hospitals were not forgotten, and provision was made for annual commemoration services in various convents.

The Countess of Olivarez sent all the servants to Madrid, to receive their legacies from the steward, Don Raimond Caporis, who had orders to pay them; but I could not leave with them, for a violent fever, the result of my grief, confined me to the castle for seven or eight

days. During that time the Dominican father did not leave me. This good friar had conceived a friendship for me ; and as he took an interest in my salvation, he asked me, when he saw that I became convalescent, what mode of life I was going to adopt. "I cannot tell, reverend father," I said, "I have as yet not made up my mind on that subject. At times I am tempted to shut myself up in a cell, there to repent of my sins." "How precious are such times !" exclaimed the Dominican. "Señor de Santillana, you would do well to profit by them. I advise you as a friend, to retire to our convent at Madrid, for instance, as a secular member ; to become its benefactor by a donation of all your property, and to die there in the habit of St Dominic. Many personages expiate a worldly life by such an end."

In the actual disposition of my mind, the advice of the monk did not repel me, and I answered his reverence that I would reflect upon what he had said. But on consulting Scipio, whom I saw a moment after the monk's visit, he strongly opposed the idea, which seemed to him merely a sick man's fancy. "For shame, Señor de Santillana," he said ; "can such a retreat tempt you ? Does not your seat at Lirias offer a more eligible seclusion ? If you were charmed with it before, you will still better enjoy its pleasures now,

because you are of an age more calculated to enjoy the beauties of nature.”<sup>1</sup>

The son of La Coscolina had no great difficulty in making me alter my mind. “Friend,” I said to him, “you have prevailed over the Dominican father. I see clearly, in fact, that it will be better for me to return to my seat. I am resolved on this step, so we shall repair to Lirias as soon as I am able to travel.” This happened shortly; for the fever having left me, I soon felt strong enough to carry out my resolution. Scipio and I went first to Madrid. The sight of that town did not give me as much pleasure as it had formerly done; and as I was aware that most of its inhabitants abhorred the memory of a minister of whom I retained the most tender recollection, I could not look on it with a favourable eye. I thus limited my stay there to five or six days, which were employed by Scipio in making preparations for our departure to Lirias. While he was busily arranging for all that we needed, I went to Caporis, who paid me my legacy in doubloons. I also went to visit the receivers

<sup>1</sup> The age of Gil Blas seems always to have been more or less of a stumbling-block, even to Lesage. During the long period of Gil Blas’ residing with the Count of Olivarez, the latter nearly always called him *mon enfant*, though our hero was over fifty, or according to Llorente over thirty, when he first saw that minister. The faithful Scipio also playfully mentions Gil Blas’ “time of life” (See bk. xi., ch. i., p. 345), twenty-four years before he thinks him “of an age more calculated to enjoy the beauties of nature.”

of the commanderies on which I had annuities, and arranged with them about their regular remittance; in a word, I set all my affairs in order.

On the eve of our departure I asked Scipio if he had taken leave of Don Henry. "Yes," he replied, "we separated this morning on good terms; he went so far as to say that he was sorry at my leaving him. But if he was satisfied with me, I was scarcely so with him. It is not enough that a servant should please his master, a master must also please his servant; or else they cannot get on well together. Besides," he added, "Don Henry makes now but a pitiable figure at Court. He has fallen into utter contempt, is pointed at in the streets, and no one calls him anything but the son of the Genoese woman.<sup>1</sup> Judge whether it is pleasant for a lad of honour to serve a man who is so dishonoured."

We at length left Madrid one fine morning at daybreak, and took the road to Cuença. Our way of travelling and our mode of conveyance was as follows. My confidant and I were in a carriage drawn by two mules, driven by a postilion; three pack-mules laden with our baggage and our money, and led by two grooms, fol-

<sup>1</sup> The populace of Madrid called Don Henry "a man with two names, a son of three fathers, and a husband of two wives." The latter name he only received when he had divorced his first wife in order to marry his second.



lowed close behind; and two stout footmen, selected by Scipio, mounted on mules, and armed to the teeth, closed up the rear. The grooms had also swords, and the postillion had a pair of good pistols in his holsters. As we were seven men, of whom six were determined fellows, I set out cheerfully, without trembling for my legacy. When we passed through the villages, our mules shook their bells proudly, and the peasants ran to their doors to see us pass, supposing us to be at least a nobleman and his attendants, going to take possession of some vice-royalty.

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## CHAPTER XIII.

THE RETURN OF GIL BLAS TO HIS SEAT. HIS JOY  
AT FINDING HIS GOD-DAUGHTER SERAPHINA  
MARRIAGEABLE. THE LADY WITH WHOM HE  
FELL IN LOVE.

It took us a fortnight to reach Lirias, as there was no occasion to travel by rapid stages. All I desired was to get there without mishap, and this desire was fulfilled. The sight of my domain brought at first melancholy thoughts into my mind, and recalled the memory of Antonia; but I soon succeeded in getting rid of them, being unwilling to occupy myself with

anything save pleasant ideas; besides, as she had been dead these two and twenty years, the impression of her death had become greatly weakened.

As soon as I entered my seat, Beatrix and her daughter came forward and greeted me most cordially; and then father, mother, and daughter embraced each other with transports of pleasure which charmed me. When they had finished I looked attentively at my god-daughter, whom I thought very lovely, and said—"Is it possible, and can this be that Seraphina whom I left in the cradle when I departed from Lirias? I am delighted to see her again, grown so tall and pretty; we must think about settling her in life." "Why, my dear god-father," said my god-daughter, blushing a little at my last words, "you have only seen me for a moment, and you are thinking already of getting rid of me!" "No, my child," I replied, "we do not mean to lose you; but to find you a husband who shall not carry you off from your parents when he marries you, but who will, so to say, become a member of our household."

"Just such a one offers himself," said Beatrix. "A nobleman of this neighbourhood saw Seraphina one day at mass in the chapel of our hamlet, and fell in love with her. He paid me a visit, declared his passion, and asked my consent. You can imagine very

well what reply I gave. ‘Even if you had my permission,’ I said to him, ‘you would be no nearer to your object; Seraphina is dependent on her father and god-father, who alone can dispose of her hand. All I can do for you is to inform them of your application, which is an honour to my daughter.’ In fact, gentlemen,” she continued, “I was going to write to you about this immediately; but as you have returned, you can do what you think proper.”

“And in other respects,” said Scipio, “what is the character of this hidalgo? Is he not like most of his kind, proud of his nobility, and insolent with plebeians?” “Oh no, not at all,” replied Beatrix, “he is a young man of very gentle and polished manners; of good appearance moreover, and not quite thirty.” “You draw us a very fine portrait of this gentleman,” I said to Beatrix; “what is his name?” “Don Juan de Jutella,”<sup>1</sup> replied Scipio’s wife; “it is not long since he inherited his father’s estate, and he lives at his seat, about a league hence, with a younger sister of whom he takes care.” “I once heard some mention made of this gentleman’s family,” I observed; “it is one of the best in the kingdom of Valencia.” “I care less for his nobility,” exclaimed Scipio, “than for the qualities of his heart and mind; this Don Juan will suit us if he is a man of honour.”

<sup>1</sup> Llorente says this gentleman ought to be called “de Antella.”

“He has that reputation,” said Seraphina, joining in the conversation; “the inhabitants of Lirias, who know him well, say everything that is good of him.” At these words from my god-daughter, I smiled and looked at her father; and he, having observed them as well as myself, concluded that the gallant did not displease his daughter.

This gentleman soon heard of our arrival at Lirias, and two days afterwards came to visit us at my seat. His address was pleasing; and, far from belying by his appearance what Beatrix had told us of him, he gave us a high opinion of his merits. He told us that he came as a neighbour to congratulate us on our safe return. We received him in the most affable manner possible; but his visit was one of mere politeness, and only mutual compliments were exchanged. Don Juan, without saying a word of his love for Seraphina, withdrew, simply asking permission to visit us again, and to profit by a proximity from which he foresaw he would derive great pleasure. When this gentleman had gone, Beatrix asked us how we liked him. We replied that he had prepossessed us in his favour, and that it seemed to us that it would be difficult for Seraphina to find a better match.

Next day I went after dinner with Scipio to return the visit which Don Juan had paid us. We set out for his seat, with a guide, who

told us, after we had walked three-quarters of an hour—"Behold the castle of Señor Don Juan de Jutella." We scanned the country in vain for a long time before we could see it; and only discovered it when we were close to it, for it was situated at the foot of a mountain, in the midst of a wood whose lofty trees hid it from our sight. It had an antiquated and dilapidated appearance, which denoted rather the noble descent than the wealth of its master. Nevertheless, when we had entered, we found the tumble-down look of the building compensated by the elegance of the interior.

Don Juan received us in a handsome room, where he introduced us to a lady whom he presented to us as his sister, Dorothea, and who was about nineteen or twenty years old. She was very well dressed, like a lady who, in expectation of our visit, desired to appear before us to the best advantage. Thus all her charms met my gaze at once; and she made on me the same impression which Antonia had made before, so that I became quite agitated; but I concealed my agitation so well that even Scipio did not remark it. Our conversation turned, as on the previous day, on the mutual pleasure which we should have in seeing each other occasionally, and in living united as good neighbours. Don Juan did not yet speak to us about Seraphina, and we said nothing which could induce him to declare his love, for we



were not sorry that he should broach that subject himself. During our conversation I frequently cast a side glance on Dorothea, though I made a point of looking at her as little as possible; yet, whenever our eyes met, I felt a fresh dart launched against my heart. However, to do justice to the object of my love, and without flattering her, I must admit that her beauty was not perfect; her complexion was dazzlingly fair and her lips redder than the rose, but her nose was a little too long, and her eyes too small. Yet the general effect quite bewitched me.

In short, I left Don Juan's mansion a different man from what I was on entering it; so that, returning to Lirias, my mind was so full of Dorothea, that I saw and spoke of nothing but her. "How is this, master?" said Scipio, looking at me in astonishment; "you seem much taken up with Don Juan's sister. Are you in love with her?" "Yes, my friend," I replied, "and I blush with shame in acknowledging it. Oh, Heaven! since Antonia's death, I have beheld a thousand pretty women with perfect indifference; must I now at my time of life meet one who inspires me with love in spite of myself?" "Indeed, sir," replied Coscolina's son, "you ought to congratulate yourself on the occurrence, rather than complain; you are still of an age in which it is not ridiculous to burn with the ardour of love, and time has not yet so withered your

brow as to deprive you of the hope of pleasing.<sup>1</sup> Take my advice; when you next see Don Juan, ask him boldly for his sister's hand; he cannot refuse her to such a man as you; besides, if he only wishes to bestow Dorothea's hand on a nobleman, are you not one? You have a patent of nobility, and that is enough for your posterity. When time shall have cast over this patent the thick veil wherewith it covers the origin of so many families, the race of the Santillanas will be one of the most illustrious, after four or five generations."

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## CHAPTER XIV.

THE DOUBLE MARRIAGE WHICH WAS CELEBRATED AT LIRIAS; AND WHICH BRINGS TO A CONCLUSION THE HISTORY OF GIL BLAS OF SANTILLANA.

SCIPIO encouraged me by this speech to declare myself in love with Dorothea, without considering that he exposed me to a refusal. Nevertheless, I only determined to do so with fear and trembling. Though I carried my years well, and might have called myself a good ten years younger than I actually was, I could not help thinking that reasonably my pleasing a

<sup>1</sup> See vol. i., INTRODUCTORY NOTICE, p. xxvii.

young beauty did not seem very likely. But I resolved to run the risk and make the proposal the very first time I should see her brother again, who, on his side, not being sure of obtaining my god-daughter's hand, was also not without anxiety.

He came again to my house next morning, just as I had finished dressing. "Señor de Santillana," he said, "I have come to Lirias to-day to speak to you on some serious business." I took him into my study, where, entering on the subject at once, he continued—"I fancy you are not unacquainted with the reason that brings me hither; I love Seraphina; and as you have great influence with her father, I beseech you to intercede in my favour. Enable me to obtain the object of my love, and let me owe to you the happiness of my life." "Señor Don Juan," I replied, "as you have come directly to the point, you will not object to my following your example. I promise to say a good word for you with my god-daughter's father, but I must ask you to do the same for me with your sister."

On hearing these last words, Don Juan showed that he was agreeably surprised, which was a favourable omen for my suit. "Is it possible," he exclaimed, "that Dorothea has made a conquest of your heart since yesterday?" "She has bewitched me," I said, "and it would make me the happiest of men

if both of you should approve of my suit." "You may rely on our approval," he replied; "for though we are nobly born, we do not look down on an alliance with you." "I am glad," I answered, "that you make no difficulty about accepting a plebeian as your brother-in-law; I esteem you the more for it, and thereby you show your good sense. But even if you were vain enough to refuse your sister's hand to any but a nobleman, I could satisfy your vanity. For twenty years I have been employed in government offices; and the King, in order to reward the services which I have rendered to the State, has granted me a patent of nobility, which I will show you." I then took my patent from a drawer in which I quietly kept it and handed it to Don Juan, who read it through attentively and with vast satisfaction. "That is well," he replied, as he gave it back to me, "Dorothea is yours." "And you may reckon on Seraphina being yours," I exclaimed.

These two marriages being thus settled between us, it only remained to know whether the brides-elect would object to them; for Don Juan and I, equally fastidious, did

<sup>1</sup> Gil Blas seems too excited to be able to calculate, for he had been employed in government offices for twenty-eight years, namely from 1611 till 1617 under the Duke of Lerma, and from 1621 till 1643 under the Count of Olivarez. Moreover, in speaking of the death of Antonia (see bk. xii. ch. 13), Gil Blas also says that he lost her twenty-two years ago; this ought to be twenty-four, for she died in 1621, and he did not return until 1645.

not dream of obtaining their hands against their consent. He returned to the castle of Jutella to lay my proposal before his sister; and I called together Scipio, Beatrix, and my god-daughter, in order to communicate to them the conversation I had just had with this gentleman. Beatrix thought he should be accepted as a husband without hesitation; and Seraphina showed, by her silence, that she was of her mother's opinion. As for the father, it is true he did not dissent; but he showed some anxiety concerning the dowry to be given to a nobleman whose seat, as he said, stood so much in need of repairs. I closed Scipio's mouth by telling him that that was my affair, and that I should present my god-daughter with a dowry of four thousand pistoles.

I saw Don Juan again the same evening. "Your love-affair," I said, "is proceeding admirably; I wish that mine may promise no worse." "Yours also goes on swimmingly," he replied; "I had no occasion to use my influence to secure Dorothea's consent, as you have made an impression on her, and as your manners please her. You were afraid you might not be to her taste, while she fears, with more reason, that having nothing to offer you but her heart and her hand..." "What could I desire more?" I broke in, in a transport of joy: "Since the charming Dorothea has no reluct-



ance to unite her lot with mine, I ask no more ; I am wealthy enough to marry her without a dowry ; in possessing her all my wishes will be crowned."

Don Juan and I, much pleased at having successfully brought matters to such an issue, resolved, in order to hasten our weddings, to dispense with all superfluous ceremonies. I brought this gentleman and Seraphina's parents together, and after they had agreed on the marriage settlements, he took his leave, promising to return next day with Dorothea. My desire to appear before this lady to the best advantage, caused me to spend three hours at least in dressing and beautifying myself ; yet, after all, I was not satisfied with my appearance. To a young man it is simply a pleasure to make preparations for paying a visit to the lady he loves ; but to a man who is beginning to grow old, it is serious work. However, I was more fortunate than I deserved ; I saw Don Juan's sister again, and was received by her so affably that I imagined I still possessed some merit. We conversed for a long time together, and I was charmed by her understanding ; it seemed to me that, by treating her well and by being very kind to her, she might really like me as a husband. Full of so sweet a hope, I sent to Valencia for a couple of lawyers to draw up the mar-





riage-settlements. Then we had recourse to the vicar of Paterna, who came to Lirias, and married Don Juan and me to the objects of our loves.

Thus for a second time did I light the torch of Hymen ; and I had no cause to repent it. Dorothea, like a virtuous wife, was delighted to do her duty ; and, conscious of the pains which I took to anticipate her desires, she soon loved me as well as if I had been a young man. On the other hand, Don Juan and my god-daughter burned for one another with the most ardent love ; and what is not very common, the two sisters-in-law conceived the most cordial and sincere friendship for each other. I, on my side, found so many good qualities in my brother-in-law, that I felt a genuine affection for him spring up in my breast, which he did not repay with ingratitude. In short, we were so united that, at night, when we had to say good-bye to each other until next morning, we could scarcely bear to be separated ; so, finally, we determined to make one household of the two, and to live at one time at Lirias and another at Jutella, which latter place, for this purpose, underwent extensive repairs, by the help of his Excellency's pistoles.

For these three years, dear reader, I have led a life of happiness amidst those who are so

dear to me. As a crowning joy, Heaven has deigned to bless me with two children, whose education will be the amusement of my declining years, and whose father I devoutly believe I am.

THE END.



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